Commentary

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WHAT TO DO ABOUT

The Children
William J. Bennett

Immigration
Linda Chavez

The CIA
Richard Pipes

Land for Cash? / Dore Gold

Juries on Trial / Richard A. Posner

An Amateur Jew / Herb Greer

Black Kids and Basketball / Mark Gerson

Victim Art / Terry Teachout

Books in Review: Aaron L. Friedberg / Josef Joffe / Jerry Z. Muller / Steven R. David / Jonathan Rosen

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Commentary®

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The Peace Process: I

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While there are reasons to support a "gloomy view" of the Arab-Israeli peace process, Norman Podhoretz ["The Peace Process So Far," December 1994] relies on exaggerations and misinterpretations to defend his position.

In the 1992 Israeli election that brought the Rabin government to power, Mr. Podhoretz claims that only Yitzhak Rabin's hawkish reputation secured Labor's victory. This ignores the economic mess, strained relations with the United States, and perceived failure in the absorption of thousands of Soviet immigrants under Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Likud. Building on this point, Mr. Podhoretz acts as if Shimon Peres's appointment as Foreign Minister and the Labor-party coalition with the leftist Meretz faction were surprising concessions to dovish Laborites.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As the former leader of the Labor party, it was only natural that Peres run the Foreign Ministry, given that Rabin would not let Defense out of his own hands. Not only have the various building blocks of Meretz been traditionally close to the Labor party, but Meretz also had more seats in the new Knesset than the right-wing Tsomet party. How can anyone who has followed Israeli electoral politics suggest that Rabin's reasons "remain mysterious"?

Rabin has clearly crossed a number of "red lines" in the peace negotiations. Perhaps he learned from the late Menachem Begin that full withdrawal and political concessions can bring about a peace treaty and other benefits, as Begin demonstrated with Egypt.

Regarding the Palestinians, focusing on Yasir Arafat's failure to change the PLO charter misses the larger issue: Arafat apparently lacks a majority among the committee members needed to change it. This should be the real cause for concern because of what it suggests about broader Israeli-Palestinian issues.

The same is true of the relation between Hamas and the PLO, which Mr. Podhoretz calls a "strategic alliance." Thus far, the PLO has proved inept at governing and generally unresponsive to the needs of the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, Hamas is active, outspoken, militant, and ably provides an array of social services. The real concern should be the PLO itself because Hamas would become secondary if the PLO could function effectively. Arafat needs to get his own house in order, but he also needs more money from international donors and more power on civilian issues from the Israelis.

Syria is "arming itself to the teeth," says Mr. Podhoretz. The last time I checked, so was Israel. But at least Israel gets high-quality U.S. technology that far outperforms Russian or Chinese weaponry.

Will "the Jews" in the Golan Heights and West Bank "resist being expelled from their homes"? Some Jews will resist, but the vast majority will leave peacefully, especially the tens of thousands who came to the West Bank for a better mortgage and an easy commute to Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

For years the argument has raged between supporters of the pre-peace-process situation like Mr. Podhoretz and supporters of a negotiated solution that involves significant territorial concessions by Israel. With the former approach, unending bloodshed is guaranteed. With the latter, there is at least a risk of lasting peace.

JEREMY PRESSMAN
Carnegie Endowment for
International Peace
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am confounded by Norman Podhoretz's attitude. Is he really serious in suggesting that, should it withdraw to pre-'67 borders, Israel would be as vulnerable as were the South Vietnamese two decades ago? Can he possibly believe that a modern Israel, deprived of the occupied lands, would be less capable of defending itself than it was 20 or 27 years ago?

Similarities between Palestinian and North Vietnamese guerrilla activities notwithstanding, Israel is, without question, the most powerful, technically-advanced military entity in the region. Having stopped just short of admitting to its membership in the "nuclear club," Israel clearly outguns its neighbors. I for one find it hard to believe that Israel's enemies would lose any respect for the firepower and skill of the Is-

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rael Defense Force (IDF) just because of a withdrawal to pre-'67 borders.

One hopeful outcome of a comprehensive peace would be the eventual normalization of relations among all nations in the region. Subsequently, increased trade would help to improve living standards and, after a fashion, set the stage for democratic institutions to flourish. This is the single best way to ensure that the savage, apocalyptic vision of Mr. Podhoretz never occurs—and it is better than the status quo.

Although Mr. Podhoretz's article teems with fear, pessimism, and resignation, I believe that we now have a rare window of opportunity for a "make-or-break" peace. Without a Soviet Union to abet Israel's enemies and with American commitment unflagging (reemphasized recently by Republican Senator Mitch McConnell), Israel has a chance that will not last indefinitely.

So, instead of caving in to the gloomy fear-mongers, I will keep recalling the Talmud: "All the darkness of the world cannot extinguish the light of one candle."

PETER BLOCK
Pittsford, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The basic premise in Norman Podhoretz's article is that Israel should not relinquish any territory in the West Bank and Gaza. The arguments are the same as they were in his previous COMMENTARY articles, "A Statement on the Peace Process" [April 1993] and "Another Statement on the Peace Process" [June 1993]. Again, unfortunately, he does not provide an alternative. It should be obvious by now to any objective observer that Israel cannot continue to rule over more than 1.5 million hostile inhabitants in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Mr. Podhoretz should ask himself why neither Menachem Begin nor Yitzhak Shamir annexed the West Bank and Gaza. Both of them had the votes needed to do it. The reason, of course, was the 1.5 million hostile inhabitants of these areas.

It is true that the Oslo agreement is gravely flawed. Yasir Arafat is unable to stop the deadly terror, which should not have been a surprise to anybody but Peres and Rabin. Still, the one positive aspect of the Oslo agreement is the separation between Israel and the Palestinian entity. Mr. Podhoretz is wrong when he writes that in the end Israel will relinquish all of the West Bank including East Jerusalem. With the possible exception of the extreme Left, Israel is united in its will to prevent any redivision of Jerusalem and will not relinquish any part of it to the Palestinian entity. The Palestinians will have to establish their capital in a different city. It is very plausible that Gush Etzion, Maale Adumim, and part of the Jordan valley will remain in Israeli hands. But most of Judea and Samaria and all of Gaza . . . will in the end become a Palestinian state. If the Palestinians will not accept that solution, then Israel could establish the new borders unilaterally and implement them. Then if the Palestinians want peaceful relations, Israel will gladly reciprocate. If not, Israel will be able to protect its borders as it was able to do between 1948 and 1967.

JACOB AMIR
Little Rock, Arkansas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bravo for Norman Podhoretz's "The Peace Process So Far." I hope it is thoughtfully studied both here and in Israel. . . . My thanks as well for publishing, in the same issue, the vital report of the Center for Security Policy, "U.S. Forces on the Golan Heights?" Without COMMENTARY, these findings, views, and facts would have no hearing outside limited, specialized circles. There are other good Jewish magazines, of course, but none has the courage of COMMENTARY to dissent and breast the tide of establishment doctrine or its influence and its ability to reach a wide audience. . . .

How has the present defeatist, self-denying mood taken hold in Israel, carrying with it the prospect of one territorial amputation after another? . . . The chief culprit has been an incredible disregard for history. Mr. Podhoretz touches on a crucial aspect of it when he observes parenthetically that Shamir was reluctantly drawn into the 1991 Madrid conference "largely under pressure from the Bush administration." That remark speaks worlds. It is precisely the arm-twisting of the U.S. government—more specifically the State Department—that has been Israel's nemesis from the days of Eisenhower and Dulles on. Those two initiated the mischief when, to the dismay of Golda Meir, they barged into

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the Suez Canal situation in November 1956, dragging the UN with them, and forced Britain and France to withdraw, thereby rescuing Nasser. The unearned victory that was handed to Nasser in 1956 . . . established the principle that Israel, alone among the nations of the earth, having won territory in a purely defensive war, had to surrender it all—even within the boundaries of western Palestine itself—with no *quid pro quo* on the part of the Arabs!

Books and articles have painstakingly documented this history; the State Department policy of favoring the Arabs at the expense of Israel has been undeviating and relentless for 40 years. . . . With Warren Christopher now in charge, Israel is mercilessly forced to give and give and give of its tiny land. . . . Alleged U.S. government support of Israel is a myth, a public-relations blind; in fact, Washington's policy is a bear hug—it is meant to squeeze the daylights out of Israel. Not until the country extricates itself from Washington's ursine embrace will it again stand firm and chart its own course. That is how a sense of history can contribute—*must* contribute—to the formulation of policy.

But not only can history be ignored—worse still, it can be perverted and twisted by means of propaganda and lies. We know how the Nazis falsified Jewish history, and what that distortion meant for the Jews of Germany and then all of Europe. . . . The Arabs learned their lessons well from German propagandists. . . . The most insidious propaganda achievement of the Arabs, abetted by the UN and by anti-Semitic and gullible "know-nothing" elements in both Europe and America, has been to invent a new people, "the Palestinians," by which is meant not the Jews and Arabs of Palestine but the Arabs alone. . . . When Rabin started referring to "the Palestinians," the cat was out of the bag about what he and Peres had given away in the Norwegian woods. . . .

Are we Jews now to forget our historic identification with the land of Palestine? Jews have lived there and known it as their ancestral homeland for, as Winston Churchill said, 3,000 years—in fact longer. Are Palestinian Jews today suddenly to be declared not Palestinians? . . .

Yet Mr. Podhoretz himself unwittingly falls into this trap; he uses the term "Palestinians" (meaning Palestinian Arabs) no fewer than three times! It is an unthinking misuse of the word, to be sure, but nonetheless harmful for that—in fact all the more worrisome. Words are terribly important: labels govern thought and shape action. To the extent that the Arabs of Israel (whether PLO or Hamas-influenced makes no difference, as Mr. Podhoretz correctly points out) declare themselves "the Palestinians," and others—including American Jews and Israelis themselves—let them get away with this fraud, they will consolidate their hold on an expanding area of Palestine west of the Jordan, squeezing Jewish Palestine—Israel—into an ever-shrinking ghetto pressed against the Mediterranean Sea. . . .

DAVID LYON HURWITZ
New York, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . A new war between Israel and the Arab/Muslim/Palestinians will threaten the very survival of the Jewish state. This is not a matter for interesting "intellectual discussion" as we go about our business. We are talking about the life and death of the Jewish state and the consequences for the Jewish people everywhere.

When Norman Podhoretz first voiced serious reservations about the agreement between Israel and the PLO, he was pilloried as an "alarmist." Since then, many others have raised questions, although few have had the courage or the brashness to speak publicly of the abject failure of the negotiations.

Are we not at a historic crossroads? The government of Israel is proceeding to implement a plan which it believes will bring Israel the peace we all seek. Others—like Mr. Podhoretz—are convinced that the plan will bring war, and worse, to Israel and its people.

Under these circumstances, do we "hope for the best," and "look the other way," risking the unthinkable sin of failure to recognize reality, as did those who did not want to believe the horror of the Holocaust?

Do we dare to think that Mr. Podhoretz's dire predictions will become reality, or should we assume that his warnings are unrealistic and should be ignored?

Or should we conclude that this is not a matter for action by Jews in the Diaspora and that if the citizens of Israel are willing to "take risks for peace," it will be their responsibility if it turns out that they judged wrong?

It is at this point that Mr. Podhoretz uncharacteristically falls short. He does not urge termination of the negotiations; he does not suggest the need for an immediate change of government in Israel; he does not call upon the Jewish people to rally in the streets.

If Mr. Podhoretz is so convinced that his prognosis is right, why has he failed to tell us what action should be taken, in Israel and in the Diaspora?

PAUL FLACKS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz is much too pessimistic. While I share all of his misgivings about the peace process, I do not think that the disaster he foresees is inevitable.

The big question mark is the attitude of the Israeli public. After all, Israel is a democracy. Though governments have a great deal of leeway between elections, this leeway is not unlimited. At least it is not unlimited for politicians who want to be reelected. And this includes the overwhelming majority of politicians.

These considerations are now operating with a vengeance in Israel. The Secretary General of the Labor party, a left-wing supporter of Peres, has come out for the suspension of further actions relating to the peace process for two years. Two years . . . just happens to carry us through the next Israeli elections. Rabin and much of the Israeli cabinet are now not willing to proceed with the withdrawal of the IDF from Palestinian population centers, as the Oslo agreement requires. The reason seems to be based on polling which shows that, if elections were held today, Labor and Meretz would be soundly defeated.

Rabin certainly hopes to win the next elections. As long as Palestinian terror continues, it is doubtful that he will take major actions which he thinks are unpopular with the Israeli public. It is, therefore, entirely possible that no irreversible actions will occur during the next year or so before the start of the election campaign.

It is none too early to begin considering what actions should be taken if the opponents of the peace process win the next elec-

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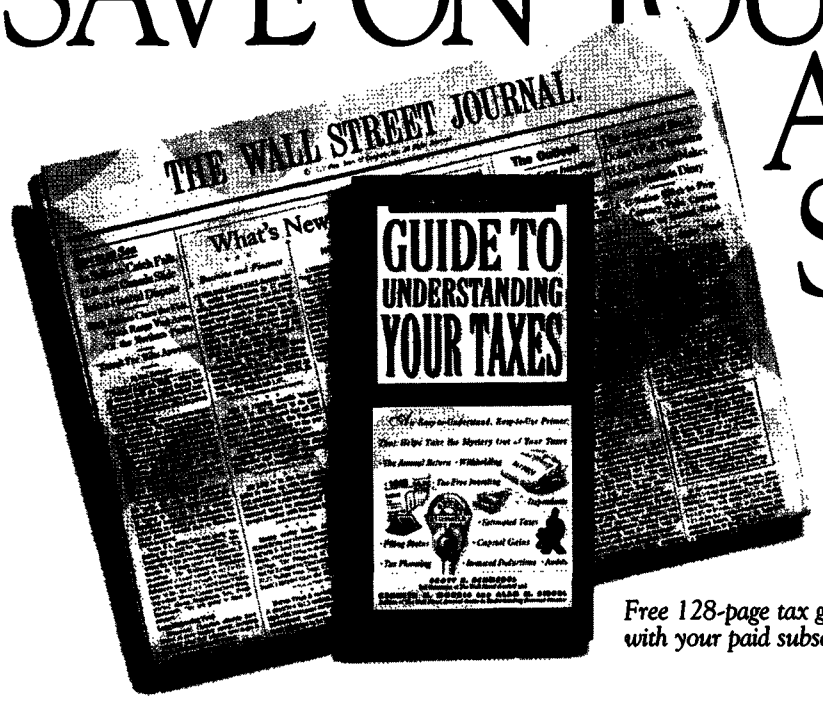

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tion. On the one hand, most Israelis do not want most of Gaza back. Likud would probably want to move forward with some form of autonomy, which it has always supported. On the other hand, a new government would almost certainly want to end the recognition of Arafat and the PLO, allow the IDF greater authority to pursue terrorists, and take other actions to protect Israeli security.

This kind of analysis, however, cannot proceed if the opponents of Labor's peace process believe all is lost. Instead, it is essential to develop a strategy for ensuring the defeat of Labor in the next election and for the implementation of a peace process that will protect Israel's security at the same time as it is consistent with legitimate Palestinian interests.

BRUCE J. TERRIS
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The most sensible comment about the present peace process between Israel and the PLO was made six months ago by an Israeli truck driver waiting in a traffic jam near Ashdod. He said that, one way or another, either those who thought peace with the Palestinian Arabs was possible or those who thought it impossible would find out they were wrong.

Unfortunately, in an Arab community in which a mother celebrates the martyrdom of her son who had blown himself up in a terrorist attack and in which 70 percent of Arab public opinion praises the death of Israelis and is violently opposed to any Israeli sovereignty in the Holy Land, peace in not yet possible.

But life is constantly changing, and acceptance will eventually come to Israel, though not for another generation.

Norman Podhoretz's summary of the current situation is, sadly, all too true, but that is no reason to be disheartened. Remember the scorecard: the Germans killed six million Jews in four years, and Jews were looked down upon everywhere. In the last 50 years of the struggle for Jewish national survival, the number of dead from all Arab violence and war is around 20,000, and Jews are respected. We have much to be thankful for. The situation is much more hopeful than it was in 1948.

KENNETH PREISS
Omer, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's view that the Middle East peace process is more likely to end in war than peace raises, in microcosm, a profound point about how the West has conducted foreign policy in this century. . . .

The carnage of World War I stimulated desires for peace so strong that the allies fell all over themselves to disarm even in the face of evidence, openly stated, that Hitler was rearming with the intention of forcefully violating the terms of the Versailles treaty. Even Stalin, no wilting flower, was so desirous of seeing his agreement with Hitler carried out that he would not accept the evidence presented to him by Richard Sorge, his agent in Japan, who named the time and place of the Nazi invasion a month in advance. . . .

In our wish for a peaceful world, we yearn to disarm, when history teaches us that disarmament is the fastest route to war. What is now transpiring in the Middle East peace process is an instance of the disastrous policy of appeasement practiced by the West since the end of World War I. . . .

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am pleased to say that I have enjoyed yet another fantastic article by Norman Podhoretz. His articles are always insightful and right on the mark. I too believe that the peace process will not bring peace. This saddens me because I love Israel and want to see its citizens living in peace. I do not understand why Israel is being commended throughout the world for participating in something that could lead to its downfall.

I find it rather curious that Prime Minister Rabin states that the Oslo agreement will not lead to a Palestinian state. Does he believe that the Palestinians, especially their leaders, will stop with what they have now? I have to admit that I do not understand why the PLO has been allowed to get away with not renouncing the section of its charter that calls for Israel's destruction. How can peace be obtained between two parties when one party still expresses a desire for the destruction of the other? Why haven't more people acknowledged this problem and taken steps to remedy it?

The statistic of 100 Israeli lives lost to Palestinian terrorism since the agreement on the White House lawn is 180 degrees from the portrait painted in the media every day of the long-suffering Palestinians struggling for freedom and survival. Of course, this unfortunately high number is still nothing compared to the Israeli lives that would be lost if a Palestinian state were established.

I was glad to read about the PLO-Hamas connection in Mr. Podhoretz's article. I say I am glad because, for some time now, I have believed that there was some kind of alliance forming between the two groups and I am relieved that I am not the only one aware of it. I felt it was quite obvious that Hamas was acting violently so that the PLO would be painted as the moderate Palestinian's choice for leadership.

I am sickened at the thought of Israel retreating to the pre-'67 borders and a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. I agree with Mr. Podhoretz that these unfortunate and destructive actions will take place if present trends continue. My prayer is that something will occur to halt the trends and instead set the Middle East on the road to true peace.

JOANNA WHITNEY
Anacortes, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz is exactly right: the current Israeli government will allow nothing to derail its deal with the PLO. That is why, whenever a new terrorist outrage occurs and a government spokesman is asked whether it will have any repercussions on the peace process, the answer—sometimes offered forthrightly, sometimes given only after considerable hemming and hawing and throat-clearing—is always "no."

This is very different from the way Rabin presented the deal to the Israeli public a year ago. Back then he argued that if the PLO did not live up to its commitments, Israel could always "turn the wheel back," i.e., reoccupy the West Bank and Gaza. Today, however, the Israeli government argues that any such backtracking would only hand a victory to the "enemies of peace," and this Israel will never do.

For all practical purposes, therefore, Israel has negotiated an agreement with the PLO that con-

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tains no penalties for noncompliance. Surely one does not have to be a card-carrying Likudnik to recognize the folly of such a course.

JOSEPH SHATTAN
Silver Spring, Maryland

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Reading some of my dovish critics, one would never suspect that the ball is now in their court, not mine. They seem not to realize that, with the policies they support actually being followed by the government of Israel, it is no longer enough for them merely to attack their opponents; their job is to defend the consequences of their own ideas. Far from doing so, however, they have evidently blinded themselves to the fact that, subjected to a test in action, those ideas are not only failing to deliver on the glowing promises that were made for them but are in most crucial respects making things worse.

Jeremy Pressman, for example, assures us that the pre-peace-process situation would have guaranteed "unending bloodshed," and yet more Israeli blood has been shed since that process began than in any comparable period of the *intifada* (as I write, another 21 Israelis have just been massacred by a suicide bomber near Tel Aviv).

Similarly, Peter Block rhapsodizes, in the spirit of Shimon Peres's utopian vision of a New Middle East, about normalization and trade and cooperation just when Yitzhak Rabin has begun talking about the complete "separation" of Israelis and Palestinians and considers building fences around Israel as the only solution to terrorism. Exactly how separation is to be reconciled with regional integration is an intriguing question that neither Peres nor Rabin—nor Mr. Block—has yet attempted to answer.

This is the pass to which the "peace" process has already brought Israel, and if Mr. Pressman imagines that most of the people who voted for Rabin in 1992 had any idea that he would be leading them there, he ought to look at the latest polls which show Rabin losing to Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud by ever-growing margins. (He should also take another look at the facts about the 1992 election, many of which he gets wrong, including the condition of the economy under Likud and the relative sizes of the Meretz and Tsomet mandates.)

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Now that formal peace has been established between Israel and Jordan—a peace that has de facto prevailed for over 20 years—many believe that the next step should be a peace treaty between Syria and Israel, that in order to attain such a peace it would be necessary for Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria, and that, after such return, U.S. troops should be stationed on the Golan so as to safeguard the peace between the two countries.

What are the facts?

Should Israel Return the Golan? A point can be made that the whole idea of Israel's yielding the Golan Heights to Syria in order to obtain peace has no merit. Syria's historic claim to the Golan is dubious. The Golan is a desolate plateau that covers less than one percent of Syria's territory. Its only purpose for Syria is as a launching pad for attacks against Israel. For Israel, on the other hand, it provides indispensable strategic depths against attack and the ability to monitor any hostile movement on the part of the Syrians. The current Israeli government seems to be disposed to return part or all of the Golan to Syria. But it would be a first in the history of the world that, in order to attain peace, the victor returned to the vanquished aggressor any territory that had been acquired in the conflict. A much saner and more justified approach would be for Syria, in the spirit of "land for peace", to yield the Golan to Israel. It would be a small price to pay for peace.

There are those who believe that if such a return of part or all of the Golan should ultimately be agreed upon, a United States military force should be stationed indefinitely in the area in order to serve as a buffer between the two countries. One wonders what peace it could be if it required outside military force to keep the erstwhile enemies apart. But there are practical reasons why stationing U.S. forces on the Golan would be a very bad idea.

A Potential Vietnam-like Scenario. U.S. forces on the Golan would be stationed in an area populated by a menagerie of well-armed terrorists, proxies of hostile radical regimes, such as those of Syria itself, but also of Iran, Iraq, Libya and others. They would not hesitate to target U.S. servicemen. Can one doubt that a suicide bomber would wish to find glory be blowing up a U.S. barracks and killing perhaps hundreds of U.S. soldiers, just as happened in Lebanon in 1983? And it's clear that an outraged American public would demand the immediate return of its troops from such a costly project that is of no discernible benefit to the United States. Putting a U.S. military presence into this stormy junction would inevitably drag the United States into costly inter-Arab and Arab-Israel disputes and would deepen Russia's involvement in the region.

> "Involvement of the U.S. as a military buffer between Syria and Israel...could involve the United States in a Vietnam-like scenario, certainly a most unwelcome development."

Israelis have always fought their own battles. If U.S. troops were introduced into the area, Israel would become militarily dependent on the United States and that would be to the detriment of both countries. Because Israel is the most important strategic and political asset that the United States has in the entire Middle East, an area of immense geopolitical importance to our country. Deployment of U.S. troops on the Golan would change Israel's role from being such an asset to that of becoming a potentially substantial liability.

A U.S. military presence on the Golan, an area immediately adjacent to the Syrian capital of Damascus, would in time be perceived by Syria as an infringement on its sovereignty. President Assad or his successor could therefore be expected to push for eventual removal of such force, similar to Egypt's demand in 1967 for withdrawal of U.N. troops from Sinai—the event that triggered the Six-Day-War. Thus, war rather than peace could result form a deployment of U.S. troops. Involvement of the U.S. as a military buffer between Syria and Israel could be incredibly expensive in dollars, in casualties and in political capital. Worst of all, entering this quagmire could involve the United States in a Vietnam-line scenario, certainly a most unwelcome development.

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Pace David Lyon Hurwitz, the blame for landing Israel in this mess cannot be placed on pressure from Washington. In the past, *both* under Labor and Likud, those of us who opposed the path on which Rabin has—yes, mysteriously—embarked could honestly hold Washington and other outside forces responsible for trying to bully Israel into making dangerous concessions. But everything has now changed: it is the Rabin government that has set the terms and the pace, not the Clinton administration or Warren Christopher's State Department.

I confess that I found the old situation more comfortable. It permitted me to defend Israel by addressing myself to my own government as an American and without intervening in the internal Israeli debate on these issues. I also confess that as a Jew I remain uneasy over intervening in that debate when my own life is not on the line. And so I plead guilty to the charge of "falling short" that Paul Flacks levels against me. Although I have tried to tell the truth as I see it, I am not prepared to tell anyone either here or in Israel how to act on that truth.

The reason is that I am also guilty of the charge some of my less friendly critics make—that I have no alternative to offer. Indeed, my position has always been that the old status quo, with all its problems and dangers, was preferable to any of the available alternatives, and that Israel would therefore have been better off stalling until such time as a real chance of improvement presented itself.

Yet having seized prematurely on an illusory chance, Israel has, so far as I can see, no peaceful way of going back, not even under a new Likud government trying to implement a strategy like the one outlined by Bruce J. Terris. The Palestinians (I apologize to Mr. Hurwitz for using the term, but that battle has long since been lost) will simply not settle for autonomy now that they have for all practical purposes been promised statehood. On the contrary, many if not most of them (as they have made abundantly clear) will not even settle for statehood if that entails having to live alongside Israel and having to give up the dream of wiping it off the map.

This does not mean that their dream is bound to be realized and that Israel is inevitably doomed to destruction. Kenneth Preiss is right to remind us that "life is constantly changing," and it may well be that Israel will in the long run win acceptance and peace.

In the meantime, however, my fear is that Israel is being dragged not toward peace but into another war. That was the point of the analogy I drew between the Paris accords on Vietnam and the Oslo agreement, a point Mr. Block misses in thinking I was referring to outcomes rather than processes. For I agree with him that Israel is much less vulnerable than South Vietnam was and that the Israelis would probably be capable of defending themselves even if they withdrew to the pre-'67 borders.

Nevertheless such a war would be horrendously costly even if it resulted in an Israeli victory. And in a morbidly ironic twist, Israel would wind up reoccupying the territories from which it had withdrawn in the hope of being rewarded with peace.

I appreciate the kind and thoughtful letters from Frederic Wile, Joanna Whitney, and Joseph Shattan, and I want to thank Mr. Flacks and Mr. Hurwitz for the complimentary remarks with which they preface their criticisms of my article. But I also want to say again for the hundredth time: I hope and pray that I am wrong.

The Peace Process: II

To the Editor of Commentary:

Hillel Halkin ["Israel Against Itself," November 1994] should be applauded for his candid and trenchant analysis of the malaise afflicting Israeli society. He is correct in ascribing it, in the words of Daniel J. Elazar, to the "new privatism [in Israel] that does not encourage great public purposes or individual sacrifice for public tasks," and which may signify "the end of Zionism" in its classic sense of self-sacrifice for the common good.

It is also true that in this, as in many other respects, Israel reflects Western fashions, both intellectual and popular, from "the decline in religious or national exclusivism" to the addiction to pop music, fast foods, and yuppie "lifestyles." This, however, is only part of the story, and it begs the question of why Israelis—especially the young, many of whom still insist on joining elite fighting units at great risk—have also become so vulnerable to centrifugal and alienating trends, even while Israel remains under siege, a situation that until now has strengthened national cohesiveness and given Israelis a sense of national purpose.

In all likelihood, the overwhelming reason for the reduced fealty Israelis feel for their community after they leave the army is their disenchantment with the socioeconomic system, as evidenced from the fact that so many, especially among the young, vote against it with their feet by emigrating. There is a growing conviction among them that the system is not only unnecessarily difficult, but also basically unfair and does not provide equal opportunity to those without access or political clout.

Young Israelis are called upon as a matter of course to defend the land, often at risk to their lives. Yet the government, which controls 93 percent of the land in Israel (as well as all the water, natural resources, electricity, telecommunications, 140 corporations, etc., etc.), makes them pay exorbitant prices for it. It takes twelve to fifteen years' salary for the average wage earner to purchase a small three-room apartment, which means it will take a lifetime for a young couple, spending 25 percent of their income on housing, to pay off their indexed mortgage. At the same time, government land is given almost freely to privileged groups like the kibbutzim and moshavim and to various associations, firms, and individuals with political connections. The government dispenses many privileges to large Israeli firms, including control of access to markets and subsidized credit.

Many of the big Israeli corporations and banks are monopolies and oligopolies which exact high prices from the Israeli consumer, a burden especially heavy for those with low incomes. Small businesses, a major engine of growth, are severely discriminated against and are saddled with high taxes and a heavy bureaucratic load that makes it extremely difficult for young entrepreneurs to launch new ventures. This is a major reason for Israel's chronic unemployment and low wages. Salaries in heavily subsidized and protected industries, such as textiles and foods, are so low that the average monthly salary comes to only

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$1,300, while the cost of living is close to that of the U.S. Many Israelis eke out a living by having several wage earners in the family or by moonlighting, often in the cash economy. Still, most young couples make ends meet only by paying punishing interest rates on their perpetual bank overdrafts, and by constant help from their parents.

Though heavily taxed, Israelis get very little return for their money. The quality of the professionals in the government health service is excellent (Jewish doctors!), but services are poor to bad as a result of bureaucratization and gross inefficiency. Schools are overcrowded and teachers are underpaid and undertrained. Pension funds, most managed (or, more accurately, mismanaged) by the Histadrut Labor Federation, face an actuarial deficit of between 60 and 100 billion shekels!

Israelis are capable and hard-working, yet . . . wherever one turns, one can find the devastation of the economy that was initiated by the socialist Labor party, which governed Israel for its first 28 years, and then perpetuated by Likud, which actually increased the government's budget share of GNP to 85 percent at its peak. Now Labor is doing more of the same. Small wonder that a Heritage Foundation survey recently classed Israel thirteenth among nations with mostly unfree economies.

Such a portrait of Israel may stand in stark contrast to what visiting Americans observe: the beautiful homes, luxury cars, elegant shops, and crowded restaurants and night spots. There are, indeed, many Israelis who have made it big—some very big. But . . . they are the well-connected, on whom the government showers highly-paid executive positions, privileges, and benefits; the ones who enjoy preferential treatment in "public" hospitals, or can afford private health care (often paid for under the table). . . . The incomes they achieve through their ability to manipulate the system are quite high, even by American standards (the top managers of Israeli banks, which are to all intents and purposes bankrupt and in government receivership, get $600,000 annually, plus hefty bonuses, in spite of their poor management).

As Mr. Halkin points out, intellectual fashions are important; ideas do shape our lives. But, as Lord Keynes observed, it is mostly defunct economic ideas that determine our destiny. For most people, even in Israel, pocketbook issues rank first after security. Likud was thrown out of office not because of its hawkish stand, but despite it, mostly because of mounting favoritism and corruption in government and ineffectual economic policies. Labor might be subject to the same fate and for the same reasons come the next elections.

Even in a threatened Israel, it is hard to expect people to be ready to sacrifice their lives (and serve three years in the army and then 30 to 60 days annually in the reserves until age fifty-three) for a system that they do not perceive as just. Similarly, it is hard to expect people to respect the law if in order to stay solvent they must cheat on their income tax.

It is this disastrous set of socio-economic policies that has alienated many Israelis and made them reluctant to make too many "individual sacrifices for public tasks." Mr. Halkin's analysis would have been more complete had he included these crucial considerations.

DANIEL DORON
Israel Center for Social and
Economic Progress
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hillel Halkin's article provides an excellent critique of leftist excesses in Israeli political thought and behavior. But Mr. Halkin's basic argument—that dovish intellectuals and bourgeois individualism have set the stage for a government policy to return all the land conquered in the Six-Day War—also goes too far.

Yes, Yitzhak Rabin has apparently (and lamentably) changed his position on the Golan Heights 180 degrees. But not so on East Jerusalem. There is no sign that Rabin, or, for that matter, Shimon Peres, is willing to relinquish sovereignty over the eastern part of the capital, where more than 150,000 Jews live. Only the hard Right sees an innocuous guarantee from Peres to maintain the Palestinian status quo in East Jerusalem, and the government's tolerance—a grudging tolerance—of the PLO's activities in Orient House as proof of a capitulation in the making. . . .

As for the supposed anti-Zionist influence of the "new Israeli historians," these people may carry a lot of weight in the humanities departments of Hebrew and Tel Aviv universities, and on the op-ed pages of *Ha'aretz*, but I do not think they count for much in shaping the opinions of Israeli society at large. I doubt that 5 percent of Israelis know what the "new historians" are writing about, or could even name one of them.

Finally, while most Israelis do care more about themselves and their possessions than they used to, and less about their people and their land, this does not mean that they have become rootless cosmopolitans and cowards. They are not as militantly nationalistic as they once were, but on the world scale of militant nationalism, they still probably rate much higher than any other economically advanced nation.

The veterans of Israel's "1948 generation" accused their sons of going soft from relatively easy living, and of being unable, or even unwilling, to defend the country, until this younger, "espresso generation" gave a fairly decent account of itself in June 1967. The Israelis of the "Reebok generation," or the "cellular-phone-generation," or whatever you want to call it, may have lost some of the old edge, but they are still sharp enough: they won't cave in to the Arabs as easily as Mr. Halkin and some Israelis fear.

LARRY DERFNER
Tel Aviv, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hillel Halkin attacks the efforts of Israel's "new historians" to dismantle the "mythopoetics of Jewish tradition." He argues that though the poetics "may have been an impious hoax, . . . it was one without which there would be no state of Israel." But such an ex-post-facto argument will hardly quiet the revisionists, who will simply trumpet it as conceding that they are right in their facts. One needs, rather, to think clearly of the function of myths. A myth is not simply a false belief; rather, it is a statement which is believed to be true, whether true or false. Our banking system, for example, rests on two myths, both of which are false and, further, we know them to be false. The first is that when we deposit money in our account, our money stays there. The second is that any time we wish, we can all

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draw our money out. . . . But as long as we continue to believe these myths, the banking system functions. . . .

The founders of Israel created the myths and people had to believe them in order to justify the sacrifices they made and the threats they faced. Not all were false by any means, but, true or false, they were functional. What is happening in Israel now cannot be fully accounted for by the concept of . . . "privatization." Myths do not vanish in the face of facts but change as beliefs change. What is happening now is perhaps better seen as a period of myth-transition. . . .

Having just returned from a stay in Israel (my family and I lived there for a year in 1958-59 and have returned twice since then for short visits), I sensed little change in devotion to Zionist ideals. . . . The problem with ideals, as the sociologist Max Weber pointed out in his discussion of charismatic movements, is that you can keep them up only for short periods. You can go out and demonstrate all morning, but before long, you have to plant the corn, get the kids off to school, and repair the leaky roof drain. . . .

In my recent visit, which included two days on a kibbutz in the Golan, I found about the same mixture of idealism and everyday practicality as before. A leader of the kibbutz explained to me that, of course, there was the dangerous nonsense of Rabin and Peres's program for "peace," but the basic problem at the kibbutz was the fact that prices for kibbutz products (apples, electric motors, volcanic soil) were not keeping pace with inflation. . . .

Iconoclasts are always around, but Israel is in no danger from them. . . .

EDWARD GROSS
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though Hillel Halkin's article is one of the more elegantly written pieces that have appeared recently in COMMENTARY, I believe it deserves a response.

Mr. Halkin seems to argue that the attempt to come to an agreement with both Palestinians and Israel's neighboring states, including Syria, is overhasty and is apparently based on a *Zeitgeist* affecting Israel's secular population, which places exaggerated stress on the individual's well-being rather than on that of the collective.

There seems to be another underlying theme in Mr. Halkin's argument, namely, that there exists something akin to the sanctity of territory which must assume priority over the search for peace.

These are rather curious arguments. . . . Let us examine them one by one. Israel's *Zeitgeist*, with the exception of a few periods, has always been that peace is an imperative and Israel will have to make a great many concessions in order to achieve it. But this has very little to do with hedonism, individualism, or any of the other currently fashionable "isms." Israel's declaration of independence was founded on the concept of peace. The Zionist movement's adoption in 1937 of the first partition plan proposed by the Peel Commission and the overwhelming support given to the United Nations partition resolution of 1947 were based on the idea of territorial compromise and the notion of a two-state solution. The lodestar of Zionist diplomacy has always been that political reality dictates the need for compromise.

Between 1948 and 1967 Israel's political struggle was for the recognition of the 1949 armistice lines as international frontiers. This struggle was unsuccessful: Arab countries would not accept this solution or even recognize the existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East. They tried to overturn the reality of Israel by force of arms. But their failure did not invalidate the underlying concepts and the political reality which brought about the decision of the Zionist movement to accept the inner logic of partition. This logic prevails today, as it did then.

Zionism . . . did not attempt to redeem a land but a people. This remains its goal. The notion of the sanctity of land is alien to the movement; it is part of the terrible *Zeitgeist* of the 1920's and '30's, when not a few ideologies proclaimed the slogan "blood and earth" (*Blut und Boden*). . . .

Israel is not entering a "post-Zionist age." I believe that the true meaning of Zionism is that the search for peace has to be Israel's most urgent imperative.

The reasons are not only the prevailing political and security considerations, as important as they are. Nor does the imperative of peace stem from a lack of patience. Zionism must deal with questions that can only be addressed in peace, be it cold or warm.

Israel's population is made up of immigrants from 102 countries. We are still far from able to afford to all people and groups the opportunities they deserve. Nearly 800,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union have settled in Israel. They have to be made welcome not only in words but in deeds. The same holds true for the immigrants from Ethiopia. To do this in a state of permanent belligerency is a task whose prospect for success appears dim at best.

The deep cleavages between religious and ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel have to be tackled. The nature of the relationship between both religious groups and the secular majority remains to be defined. . . .

We have to deal with the problem of equal citizenship for nearly 900,000 Palestinians who are and will remain citizens of Israel, a task which surely cannot be dealt with in a state of war.

The scientific and technological revolution poses problems that cry out for solutions which a prevailing state of war makes nearly impossible.

The list is long and anyone can add to it, but these are core questions which cannot be dealt with by nostalgia, which unfortunately seems to prevail in Hillel Halkin's . . . article.

None of these problems can be solved by the possession of the Golan or through continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank. None of us knows whether we will be able to achieve the longed-for peace, but we do know that without it Zionism's goal of a flourishing society in Israel is unattainable.

I believe that this is the true *Zeitgeist* which motivates Israel's government and a vast part of its population in its search for peace.

HANAN BAR-ON
Weizmann Institute
Rehovot, Israel

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Although I agree with Daniel Doron's criticisms of the overcentralized economic policies of a long series of Israeli governments, I am less certain than he is about the connection of these policies, many of which date back to the pre-state period of the Palestinian

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yishuv (Jewish settlement), to the weakening of national will that is reflected in the Oslo agreement and its aftermath. A freer and more rational economy might do wonders for the well-being of Israel's citizens, but it will not necessarily strengthen their resolve to retain the Golan Heights or to assert Jewish rights in Judea and Samaria, the case for which does not rest on economic self-interest.

Larry Derfner wishes to defend the Rabin-Peres government on the issue of Jerusalem, but unfortunately, if he is right about the government's not being guilty of duplicity, it is guilty of something far worse—namely, stupidity. Indeed, the PLO has been perfectly candid about the fact that unless Israel relinquishes sovereignty over East Jerusalem, the Oslo agreement will not lead to peace; and to sign an agreement inviting an ex-enemy into your home with his guns when he himself tells you that he will turn these on you in the end is decidedly not wise. There are really only two possibilities: either the government has a coherent strategy and is lying about Jerusalem or it is telling the truth about Jerusalem and acting incoherently. And while Israelis may not yet have lost so much of the "old edge" that they are incapable of sticking up for themselves, it is far from clear that their present leaders are capable of sticking up for anything.

Since I wrote in my article that "all societies . . . live by collective myths that legitimate group norms precisely to the extent that they are perceived not as myths but as self-evident truths," it escapes me why Edward Gross feels the need to point this fact out to me. And if Mr. Gross, after a recent "stay in Israel," feels that the "mixture of idealism" in Israeli life is "about the same" as it was in 1958, I can only say that the country he observed is not the same one that I first visited in 1957 and have been living in since 1970.

Hanan Bar-On, too, would do well to reread my article, in which I wrote, "Israel needs peace just as the Arab countries do and should make every reasonable effort to achieve it, including painful concessions when these are absolutely necessary and are balanced by similar compromises on the other side." For Syria to get all of the Golan Heights and Israel none of it does not involve such a mutual compromise; neither does guaranteeing 900,000 Palestinians the right to live securely in their towns and villages under Israeli administration while denying a smaller number of Israelis the same right under Palestinian administration. Precisely because peace is worth paying a high price for, there is no reason why the Arabs should get it on the cheap.

Mr. Bar-On seems to think it unfortunate that the Peel Commission's plan, which proposed giving a small strip of coastal land not much bigger than today's metropolitan Tel Aviv to the Jews and the rest of Palestine to the Arabs, did not succeed. I doubt, however, that many other Jews, even those most fervently supportive of the Oslo agreement, agree with him; and if, as I believe it will, the Oslo agreement in its present form fails too, I suspect that Jews will look back on its demise with a similar sense of historical relief. Having personally spilled my blood on the earth of the Middle East in wartime, I am not about to make an ideology of it; all I am for is getting the best possible deal, territorial and otherwise, for Israel and the Jewish people, which is something that the present government and its policies are in my opinion incapable of achieving.

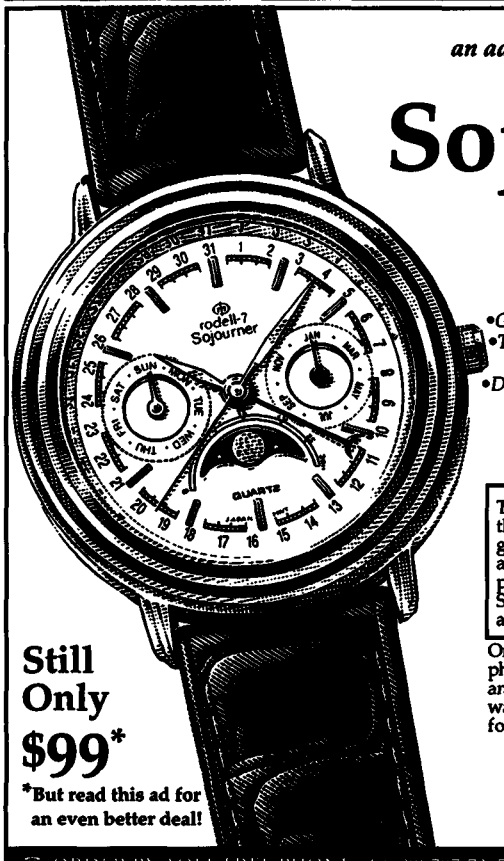
Charlie and Mark

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joseph Epstein's recollections of the quiz-show scandal ["Redford's Van Doren & Mine," December 1994] triggered a memory of my own.

Back at the dawn of TV history—1957—I was an instructor in the Columbia University English department. I was also a contestant on a Jack Barry/Dan Enright game show. Does this sound like the wayward path taken by the luckless Charles Van Doren? You bet.

The fact that game shows were rigged was not known to the megashare of the viewing audience which followed the weekly cliffhangers with the zeal deserved by a World Series playoff. But the disgruntled *Twenty-One* contestant, Herb Stempel, had already sold his confessional to the deceased daily, the *Journal/American*, which was sitting on the story. And since a friend's father was managing edi-



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tor of the paper, I was in the privileged circle of insiders who knew that the fix was in.

So when I showed up at the studio as a contestant on Barry/Enright's *Tic Tac Dough*, I was hopeful. Maybe they would make me an offer I couldn't refuse. I was taking home $4,200 a year, so the offer wouldn't have to be much.

Robert Redford's *Quiz Show* takes the line that the quiz-show scams meant the end of "an age of innocence" in our culture. I say: poppycock! Television is a medium that should not be taken seriously. And in the game-show venue, the producers were in the time-honored mode of the carnival side-show's game of chance. The suckers know that the wheels are rigged, but they play anyhow. It's fun to be fooled. How else to explain three-card Monte?

Anyhow, while I was getting made up for my appearance, the *Tic Tac Dough* producer, Howard Felsher, introduced himself. He noted that I reviewed books for *Saturday Review*. "Do you know Norman Cousins?" he asked. I did indeed know the magazine's editor.

"Then you must be a World Federalist," he said. Cousins was a passionate activist and this was one of his favorite causes, but I had to admit that I was not enrolled.

"How come?"

I explained that I didn't think the world was ready for it.

Felsher announced that he headed the Princeton, New Jersey, chapter of World Federalists, and for the next five minutes, as I was getting Max Factor pancake makeup smeared on my cheeks, he lectured me on the need for a moral world order. Not too long thereafter, he was taking evasive action against an indictment for perjury, and one of his colleagues was pictured on the front page of a daily tabloid, under arrest.

I did not win on the show, and nobody tempted me with a payoff. I got the consolation prize, a Polaroid camera. . . .

Ironically, Redford donated the proceeds of his *Quiz Show* premiere at the Ziegfeld theater to the Natural Resources Defense Council. This is the outfit that spearheaded the attack on apples treated with the agricultural chemical Alar. Alar was found to be harmless to humans and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) called the report of the Natural Resources Defense Council "gravely misleading." But not before the apple-growing industry had lost $200 million. Nobody lost money on *Twenty-One*.

MARTIN LEVIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I too knew Charles Van Doren, but over a much longer period than Joseph Epstein did. Our paths first crossed at the Institute for Philosophical Research in San Francisco, where I became a working scholar and editor in 1958, and where Van Doren was employed a few years later, after his meteoric TV career on *Twenty-One* and *Today*. It was also after the shameful revelations of the *Twenty-One* shenanigans. The wounds were still fresh, and "Charlie," as he was always called, walked around like a wounded animal, in a constantly depressed state. I did not get to know him very well then—he was too withdrawn, and I was occupied with demanding tasks.

It was only later, when I was a senior editor at *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1966-73), that I really got to know Charlie. I liked him—he was undoubtedly a decent human being as well as an interesting conversationalist, with a wide array of interests and concerns. I never asked him about the quiz-show scandal—I thought that was too personal and embarrassing, a shame that had become public, an open wound. As a matter of fact, I must confess that I never saw the show—I was not interested in that sort of thing. I regret that I did not sufficiently extend to him the confirmation that one human being owes to another.

Some time before Charlie came to the Institute, there was a mention of the scandal when his father, Mark, the eminent poet and critic, came to lunch there. It was 1959, just after he had taught his last class at Columbia, ending his 40-year stretch as a college English professor. In this case it turned out, the actual person fit the reputation—he was virtue and wisdom incarnate, not merely a fine old man. We spent a wonderful two hours chatting with him.

Finally someone asked him if he had ever detected anything in his son that might have explained what had happened. He thought for a moment and then told how he had been surprised to learn how Charlie, while serving in World War II, had participated in card games (or was it crap-shooting?) with extraordinarily high stakes. He had seen a daring and even foolish gambling spirit that he had not known was there. Charlie himself confessed to this after the debacle, and in his article Mr. Epstein has astutely picked up that clue. . . .

Although I considered *Quiz Show* one of the best movies of the year, I too cringed for Charlie as one more nail was hammered into his public reputation, and even more for the pain and embarrassment that must have ensued for his wife and children. Recalling the encounter with Mark Van Doren in the Institute, I am reminded of the achievements of the other Van Dorens. Hence (*contra* Mr. Epstein) I am led to conclude that the film relates the triumph of that part of our society that embraces a bottom-line ethic over those of a traditional, humanistic culture. This is a tragedy that Balzac, whom Mr. Epstein mentions, would have understood, and could have written. That Charlie was the fall guy, the necessary intermediary, only adds irony to the mix. . .

SEYMOUR CAIN
University of California
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I realize that Mark Van Doren is not the subject of Joseph Epstein's fine article, but a few more things need to be said about him than Mr. Epstein manages. He tells us that Mark Van Doren is less famous than his son (correct) and that he encouraged some not so good poets (well, he encouraged some very good ones, too). However, he wrote a number of remarkable works which, if not conferring fame in a very wide sense, are highly valued still by people who value such things.

Mark Van Doren's Ph.D. dissertation on John Dryden remains the best book on that subject to date, and I have taught Dryden and written about him for more than 30 years. None other than T.S. Eliot reviewed the book favorably in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* and then incorporated much of the review into his *Homage to John Dryden*.

I have recently reread Van Doren's book on Shakespeare, and also his book on the epic, *The Noble Voice*, in connection with a

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project I have in hand. The *Shakespeare* still stands up very well in, to say the least, a crowded field. The *Noble Voice* (1946, dedicated to "Charles Van Doren") is excellent on the epic tradition, and I found it very useful.

Mark Van Doren's book *Liberal Education* is a small masterpiece, concentrated and pithy, and even more timely today than when it was published.

He produced a large but uneven body of poetry, and does not seem to have realized when he was writing well and when he was not. I think a first-rate "selected poems" could be distilled from what we have. Such lines as the following, reflecting his syllabus in Hamilton Hall, seem memorable to me:

> My Great Friends do not know me.
> Hamlet in the halls,
> Achilles by the river, and Don Quixote
> Feasting with the Duke see no one there
> Like me, Mark Van Doren, who grows daily
> Older while they look not, change not,
> Die not, save deaths their masters made.

Mr. Epstein is correct that Mark Van Doren supported Henry Wallace in 1948. He also participated in the agitprop Waldorf Peace Conference, I believe. Much later, when I was his colleague in the English department at Columbia, I asked him about all this. (I must have been a real nuisance.) He replied candidly that he had been "taken in." . . .

JEFFREY HART
Lyme, New Hampshire

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Joseph Epstein does Charles Van Doren an injustice. His comments on Van Doren's quality of mind, his "lifestyle," and, most of all, his relative isolation from the public eye strike me as a caricature. I would ask Mr. Epstein to consider the fact that during all the publicity for Redford's movie, Van Doren consistently refused requests for interviews. In short, he has held on to the dignity with which he openly admitted his fault in the first place so many years ago.

Regarding his supposed isolation, I can report that during the early months of the film's release, in the midst of a very hard time for him and his family, Charles Van Doren moderated a symposium in honor of Mortimer J. Adler at the Aspen Institute in Colorado, a very public occasion in a town that loves gossip. His willingness to accept such an invitation and face the public at such an embarrassing moment is a tribute not only to his capacity for friendship, in this case with Adler, but also to a moral courage painfully won. In fact, Van Doren's performance as moderator over those three days in August gave many of us the opportunity to witness the intelligence, generosity, and dignity which Mr. Epstein so depreciates.

DEAL W. HUDSON
Crisis
Washington, D.C.

The Cold War

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I agree with many of Joshua Muravchik's points ["How the Cold War Really Ended," November 1994], I feel strongly that he is wrong about the state of the Soviet Union at the time Gorbachev took power. The error is not an insignificant one and points to some serious weaknesses in our understanding of and response to the collapse of the USSR.

Contrary to Mr. Muravchik's view, the situation in the Soviet Union at the time Gorbachev took power had become so acute that the country was severely limited in its ability to project power beyond its borders. Once this became apparent, particularly with the Soviet failure in Afghanistan, the fall of Communism was all but certain.

Although easy to assert in retrospect, this argument underlay the analysis I wrote for a statement on Afghanistan which was circulated at the Republican convention in Detroit in early July 1980. In this statement, I pointed out that there were compelling reasons to believe that the Soviets would limit their efforts in Afghanistan, thus making their defeat posssible. I also pointed out that the Soviet Union at the time was far more unstable than people outside the country realized.

In addition, I argued that when the Soviet failure in Afghanistan became generally known, it would

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also become clear that the Soviets were not likely to invade Eastern Europe to shore up their satellite regimes there. And my expectation was that there would then be a defection on the part of a country like Poland, which, I suggested, would have a profound impact both in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

While I believe this statement got it right, it really was not a remarkable analysis. As early as mid-1970, Vadim Belotserkovsky was pointing out, in a series of articles in *Partisan Review*, that economic conditions in the Soviet Union were so bad that he expected any (necessary) reform efforts to be highly destabilizing, as they had proved to be in Czechoslovakia. Beginning in 1980, the émigré economist Igor Birman, basing his opinion on an analysis of Soviet data, was arguing that the Soviet economy was headed for a crisis that threatened the very survival of the regime.

It is true that the CIA understood that the Soviet economy was running into increasing trouble in the early 1980's, but it did not really comprehend how serious the situation was. Had it done so, it would not have been so difficult to predict the instability in Eastern Europe, as the Afghanistan statement attests. The problem stemmed in part from a marked inability of the academic and intelligence communities to evaluate émigré assessments objectively.

The issue here is not just academic. As a result of professional misassessments of the situation in the former Soviet Union, Americans simply did not understand how bad things actually were there, or the opportunities that this opened up to us. Thus, our responses in this area have not been appropriate. At this point, our failure to foresee the collapse of Communism might not turn out to have been serious, but our failure to respond to it appropriately could.

JOHN HOWARD WILHELM
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joshua Muravchik makes a solid case that the policies associated with the "hawks" in American politics were responsible for ending the cold war. But Mr. Muravchik does not mention the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Ever since Ronald Reagan first announced SDI, I believed it would ultimately cause the collapse of the Soviet system. Why? Because the program dealt a fatal blow to the morale of the Soviet elite, who knew all along that they could not compete with the United States in the high-tech fields of electronics and computers—the devices required to make SDI work. A long-term commitment to SDI, I felt, would eventually allow the U.S. to win the cold war. But of course I never imagined the Soviet system would collapse so quickly.

One of the major differences between Reagan's policies and American postwar foreign policy in general was his willingness to view the cold war as a conflict that could be won. This should be contrasted with notions like Mutual Assured Destruction, which held (in my own interpretation) that the nuclear age had ended military history, or at least radically changed the rules. Throughout the 60's, 70's, and 80's, while we were indulging ourselves in the myth of détente, the Soviets were building weapons as fast as they could. Unlike us (after the 50's), they had a civil-defense program designed to spread out their industrial facilities to give them some degree of protection against nuclear attack. In short, they . . . saw the conflict as one they could win, even if it went nuclear. I think Mr. Muravchik has it exactly right when he says that President Reagan wanted "to make the cold war into more of a two-way street."

I have never seen anything in print, however, that suggested that SDI played an important role in the Soviet collapse. Could Mr. Muravchik comment on this?

Once again, thanks for a perceptive and well-prepared article.

A. STEVEN TOBY
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a longstanding Eisenhower Republican, I was greatly amused by Joshua Muravchik putting a spin on the facts so as to give Ronald Reagan credit for winning the cold war. The credit for ending the cold war can be summed up in two words: Mikhail Gorbachev. Does anyone doubt that if a healthy Leonid Brezhnev had been in power during the 80's and 90's the Berlin Wall would still be standing and large contingents of Soviet troops would still be based throughout Eastern Europe? . . .

Mr. Muravchik claims that Reagan's speeches influenced Gorbachev's actions. It requires more than a leap of faith to imagine that the Soviet Union, or any nation, would alter its policy in response to such bumper-sticker rhetoric. The increased-military-spending argument does not work, either. All the fancy technology in the world would not be able to offset the tremendous advantage the Soviet Union (or Russia) would enjoy in the event of a European war by occupying the Eurasian land mass.

China in its social and political systems is as Communist as ever, but shows no inclination to keep up with the military spending of the United States. Those who claim that the Soviets were forced to keep up with our military spending like to sweep the example of China under the rug. Unfortunately, it creates too big a lump to go unnoticed. . . .

MERWIN AUSLANDER
Laguna Hills, California

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

My main quarrel with all three letter writers is that each seems to be after a single key to unlock the mystery of the end of the cold war, and I believe there were a number of factors which intersected.

If John Howard Wilhelm was as prescient as he says he was, I take my hat off to him. Nonetheless, the Soviet Union's economic woes, however dire, do not in themselves explain its downfall. The Communist regimes of Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam endure, although they preside over economies compared to which the Soviet economy was indeed a workers' paradise. And none of them has been a slouch at projecting power beyond its borders.

I imagine that A. Steven Toby is right that SDI played a part in demoralizing the Soviet elite, and it was one of the things I had in mind when I referred to Reagan's defense policies, but I do not ascribe to it the unique importance Mr. Toby does. I am not sure that the Soviets could not have competed in a high-tech race, since in the past they had surprised us—as with the development of the hydrogen bomb, or MIRV technology—with how close to us they were. SDI, however, threatened to trump their huge investment in MIRVed heavy missiles, the crown jewel of their military efforts, and this must have been disheartening.

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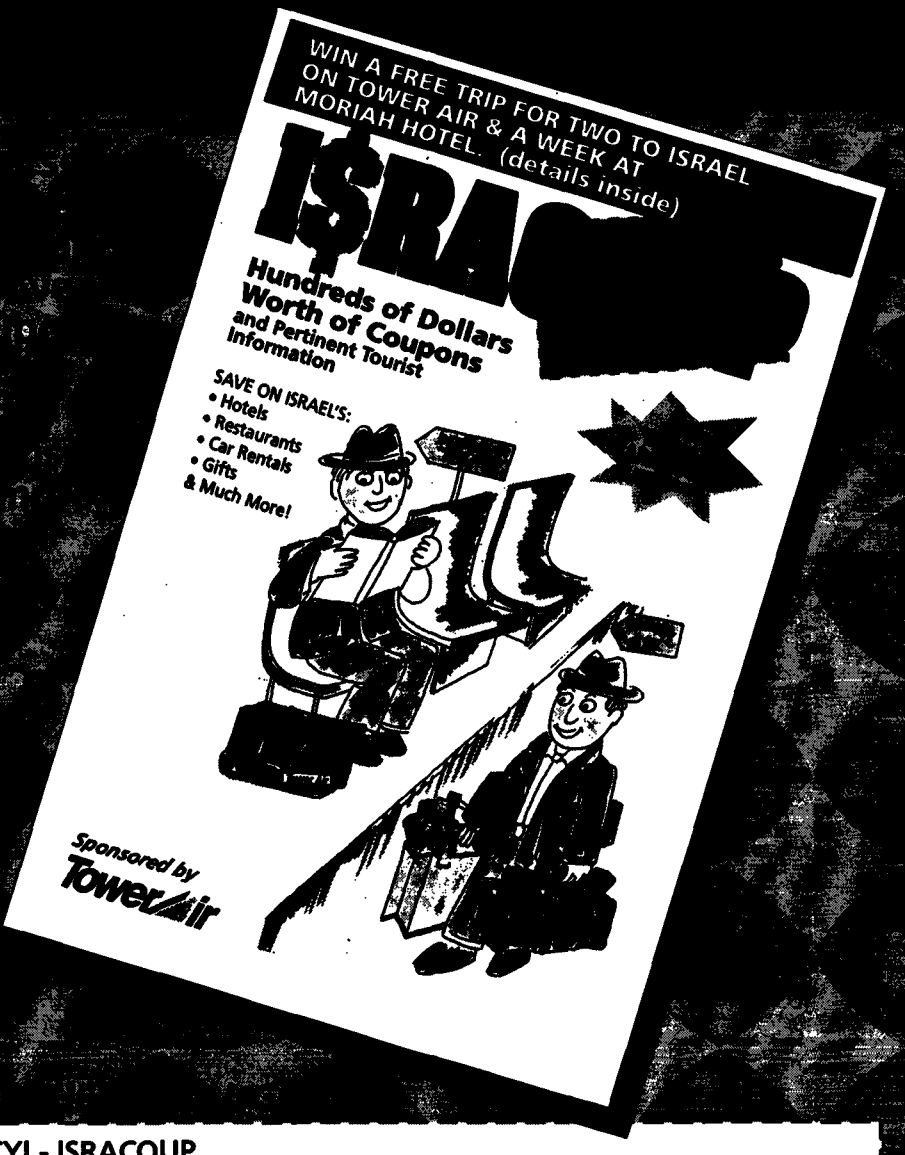

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Merwin Auslander is a bit hard to follow. Of course the Soviets were not compelled "to keep up with our military spending." They chose to spend a much larger portion of their economy on the military than we did. What Reagan's build-up did, however, was to counterbalance their huge effort, which constrained their military options and must have been discouraging. As far as we can tell, by the way, their defense spending did not decrease under Gorbachev, which bears on Mr. Auslander's other point. Of course Gorbachev ended the cold war (as I wrote). But why? What was he thinking? We know that he did not start out to do what he did. What influenced him as he went along? I believe that American policies and words did. Mr. Auslander scorns that explanation. OK, but what is the alternative explanation?

Welfare

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "What To Do About Welfare" [December 1994], Charles Murray alludes to one of the road blocks in the way of welfare reform, but he does not elaborate upon it: more tax dollars are used to pay for the administration of welfare programs than are distributed to welfare recipients. . . .

Directly, or indirectly but in obvious ways, millions of Americans owe all, or a significant part, of their livelihoods to the existence of social-welfare programs at various levels of government. Consider the case of the typical social-welfare worker and her (or, less often, his) role in contemporary society. She typically has two university degrees and has passed a stiff civil-service written examination (those who doubt that it is stiff need only consult the "Arco" series to be found in many bookstores) plus an oral examination and a job interview rounded off by a one-year probationary period. She either belongs to the "cognitive elite" or is at least at or near the fringe of it. She has about the same job security as a tenured professor and, after a few years, is likely to command a decent salary (especially at the federal level).

Try to imagine the consequences of putting hundreds of thousands, if not several million, of such people out of work. The multiplier effect would devastate Washington, D.C. (not to mention New York City) beyond the wildest dreams of Newt Gingrich. . . .

Along with teachers at all levels and (though perhaps they are a dying breed) union workers with seniority, civil servants not only enjoy what has to seem to many the luxury of secure employment and good retirement plans, but they in turn contribute to the stability of society. . . . It is easy to say the magic words "job retraining," yet such programs will not produce hundreds of thousands of secure positions but, at best, hundreds of thousands of insecure jobs. . . .

Perhaps Mr. Murray would argue that the "grandfathering" of current welfare recipients would slow down the process of discharging civil servants in the area of social welfare. Although there would be a good deal of dislocation and a number of blighted careers, over time, as the schools of social welfare shut down and the various support agencies closed their doors, other careers would be open to talent and the net result would be, one hopes, a large social gain. . . .

Perhaps modest steps along the path recommended by Mr. Murray will be taken in the 104th Congress, but only the boldest of the bold will abandon much of the status quo (the Platinum Age of American capitalism) on the gamble that Mr. Murray's plan—however good on paper—will not go the way of Murphy's law in practice.

Stanley Paluch
Boulder, Colorado

To the Editor of Commentary:

Charles Murray mentions penalties for unwed fathers as one means to end illegitimacy. But he dismisses the effectiveness of such penalties, saying, ". . . it is next to impossible for anyone, including the state, to force a man to take on the responsibilities of fatherhood." He is thinking, of course, in terms of inner-city men who seldom have any financial assets to penalize. But I believe the penalties he is considering are unduly onerous. Let us downsize our objective to one of persuading a man who is contemplating having sex with a single woman that if he wants to avoid serious trouble he had better use a contraceptive. . . .

The "serious trouble" would begin with a . . . new rule to specify that no Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments would be made to a pregnant girl until she identifies the father of her child. He must be located and (if necessary) proven by blood tests to be the father. He would then be asked to sign appropriate papers agreeing to make minimum child-support payments, thus negating the need for AFDC. If he said he could not make the payments, he would be classified as a delinquent father and be subject to penalties such as having his driver's license revoked, a practice the state of Maine began using against deadbeat fathers last June (. . . "deadbeat" fathers are those who are not making court-ordered child-support payments to their divorced wives). . . .

Anyone who has pondered the problem of how to make unwed fathers assume responsibility for their children will question whether these young men would be concerned about losing their licenses when it is doubtful that they even have them. . . . But I assume that one of the most important ambitions of every young American is to have a driver's license. . . . So if he knew that he would lose all chances of obtaining a driver's license . . . if he got his girlfriend pregnant, he would in all likelihood use some form of contraception. . . .

Mr. Murray has treated both unwed fathers and mothers as a single welfare problem. I suggest that now is the time to separate them, leaving the welfare problems of unwed mothers . . . for the social scientists, and the legal responsibilities of delinquent fathers (married or unmarried) . . . for the legal/political profession.

I hope the President will create a new Office of National Coordinator to Enforce Paternal Responsibilites which would be charged with bringing together federal and state laws. . . . It might then become feasible to have the police records of unwed fathers indicate their indebtedness. If any of these men went to court, for any cause, their police records would become an important factor in determining judgment. . . .

When we add to the above legal penalties the fact that condoms provide protection from AIDS, we now have a list of reasons for using birth control that should impress most men. . . .

E. Nelson Kimball
Fort Pierce, Florida

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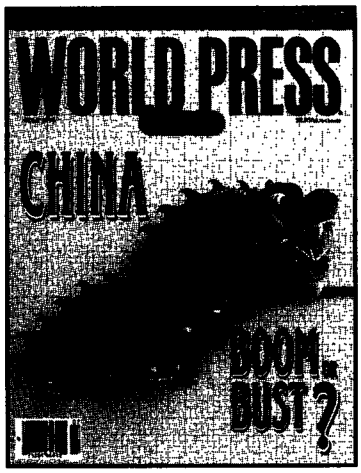

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To the Editor of Commentary:

I found Charles Murray's article on welfare thoroughly convincing, except for his emphasis on the moral component of the problem. He seems to be engaging in a kind of teleological optimism in thinking that illegitimacy would be reduced almost to zero if only girls would come to realize that it is wrong to have children when they are not in any way ready to take care of them. But if moral sanctions have not helped reduce homicide, robbery, rape, and the like . . . , why should we assume they will be effective with girls whose IQ's, as Mr. Murray points out, are not very high?

Mr. Murray also says that "the kind of response that works" occurs when a young girl is convinced that if she were to get pregnant, "My father would kill me." But that assumes that the young girl knows who her father is and that he is not indifferent to her welfare. Moreover, where 80 percent of all births are illegitimate, how many girls have fathers who would react in this way? . . .

I might be mistaken in all this, but thanks, in any case, for publishing Mr. Murray's instructive article. . . .

Bernard Adelman
Winthrop, Massachusetts

Countercultures

To the Editor of Commentary:

"And what about our own orthodoxy, the secular, humanist, rationalist orthodoxy against which all the countercultures of the past two centuries—from romanticism through modernism to postmodernism—have rebelled?" asks Irving Kristol ["Countercultures," December 1994]. I would think the answer is obvious. Our "orthodoxy" has given us our Constitution, our rights as citizens, our respect for law, our political stability. It has made us the most powerful and most prosperous of countries—the envy of the world.

Mr. Kristol describes Marxism as "so much more radical a version of modern, secular humanism." But in speaking of his own "Marxist and quasi-Marxist" students, he presents evidence that they are neither secular nor humanist: "Keeping their Marxism intact was obviously more important to them than anything else."

Our Bill of Rights, a secular document, has assured our freedom of religion. On the other hand, Stalin and Mao, blinded by the obscurantism inherent in Marx, could no more permit the free exercise of religion than could Khomeini or Torquemada.

George Jochnowitz
College of Staten Island
Staten Island, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

Irving Kristol describes *The Communist Manifesto* "as a kind of scripture." Mr. Kristol has touched on what I believe is a new way to view the rise of Communism in the 20th century—that is, as a successful cult.

The similarities between followers of Communism and religious-cult groups are unmistakable. The demand for blind obedience; the view of inevitable triumph; the complete conviction of righteousness which justifies any action in furtherance of the cause; the betrayal of anyone or anything the individual holds sacred if it will further the cause; the constant indoctrination; and the complete subordination of the individual's personality to the cause.

Most religious cults are centered around an infallible leader who demands complete loyalty. Similarly, Communism has its cult of personalities such as Stalin, Mao, and Kim Il Sung, who inspired their own form of anthropomorphy. Even if followers became disillusioned with individual Communist leaders, they could always fall back on Marx and Lenin, whose works were viewed as the inevitable tide of history.

Like all cult movements, Communism eventually exposed and devoured itself. However, an understanding of the cult-like nature of the Communist movement will allow us to identify similar movements in the future.

John C. Zimmerman
University of Nevada
Las Vegas, Nevada

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "Countercultures" Irving Kristol unintentionally demonstrates why they occur. His contempt for women's rights and anything other than his concept of "family values" coupled with his willingness to condemn as "enemies" those who disagree with him are some of the reasons countercultures develop in the first place. In blaming those he hates, Mr. Kristol reminds me of anti-Semites who blame everything on the Jews. Haven't we learned by now that scapegoating does not solve anything?

Mr. Kristol yearns for the good old days when things worked, before the "others" ruined everything. When were those days? When Native Americans were being killed off? When there was slavery? When organized labor was repressed and child-labor laws were ruled unconstitutional? During the Depression? When there was segregation, blacklisting, and McCarthyism? Mr. Kristol wants us to remember some trouble-free time that never was.

I believe we will make progress in solving this country's problems. The answers lie in real solutions, however, not down the road of self-righteousness, hate, sexism, and blame.

Stanley Ross Coleite
Los Angeles, California

Irving Kristol writes:

I have no desire to denigrate the secular-humanist rationalist orthodoxy of the last three centuries. Especially in its Anglo-American version, as distinct from its more radical French version, it has made a very significant contribution to the civilized world. My point was that, like all orthodoxies, it experiences internal contradictions which have now become the source of many of our problems. This is especially true to the degree that this orthodoxy has been living off the moral capital of the Judeo-Christian tradition. That capital seems to have become seriously depleted, as the moral chaos we are now experiencing clearly demonstrates.

I have no intention of defending myself against mindless accusations of "sexism," "self-righteousness," or whatever. I take them to be a symptom of that moral chaos.

Batter Up

To the Editor of Commentary:

I applaud George Weigel ["Politically-Correct Baseball," November 1994] for brilliantly skewering the political correctness that undermines Ken Burns's television documentary *Baseball*, although it is amusing to note that Burns's musical score contributes some remarkably crude ethnic stereotyping of its own: John McGraw makes his appearance to the subtle strains of "Danny Boy"; Connie Mack is

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accompanied by "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling"; the arrival of a Negro Leaguer is inevitably signaled by a Mississippi Delta slide guitar; and Roberto Clemente gets "*Oye Como Va.*" I am surprised that Hank Greenberg wasn't introduced by "*Hava Nagila.*"

But what finally causes this long-awaited epic by America's preeminent documentarian to self-destruct is the inevitable corollary to *Baseball*'s "central flaw" of political correctness: its astonishing lack of *factual* correctness.

In his "Reply to My Critics," Vladimir Nabokov wrote: "If told I am a bad poet, I smile; but if told I am a poor scholar, I reach for my heaviest dictionary." When critics (most notably Keith Olbermann of ESPN) condemned the wretched scholarship in *Baseball*, Ken Burns replied: "As filmmakers, we were forced to take a certain amount of poetic license" (*USA Today*, September 26, 1994). Rather than reach for his heaviest *Baseball Encyclopedia* (a massive tome that would rival Nabokov's weapon of choice, the second unabridged edition of *Webster's*), historian Burns expressed disappointment at Olbermann's "petty mind" and complained that a list of his most egregious blunders consisted of "nitpicks," adding: "We had the same thing in *Civil War.*"

Let me cite just a few of the "nitpicks." On pages 72 and 73 of the companion volume to the TV series, Burns reproduces a gorgeous panoramic team photo of the 1905 New York Giants. Unfortunately, the player Burns identifies as baseball immortal Christy Mathewson is actually Joe "Iron Man" McGinnity; Mathewson is not present in the photograph. This error is roughly equivalent to confusing General Grant with General Sherman, but let's not nitpick.

On pages 456 and 457, we find a colorful action photo with a breathless Burns caption:

> Heroics: in the first game of the 1988 World Series, Oakland pitcher Dennis Eckersley watches his slider disappear into the bleachers of Dodger Stadium as the injured Kirk Gibson begins his painful trot around the bases.

Eckersley is actually watching his slider dribble down the first-base foul lines as Gibson runs out a weak foul ball, but only a petty-minded nitpicker would dare call this to Burns's attention.

In the July 1994 issue of *Smithsonian*, Burns reveals a hallucinatory aspect of his poetic muse: "I can look at an old photograph and actually *hear* it" (emphasis in the original). From now on he had better ask those old photographs to describe to him what they actually depict. . . .

Even when confronted with moving pictures, the filmmaker remains baffled: Curt Flood makes a great catch—oops, that's Lou Brock. I can actually *hear* the *Twilight Zone* theme during Joe DiMaggio's 1941 hitting streak when Burns inexplicably inserts a reaction shot of the 1950's presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson.

Burns cannot identify the players seen in rare and beautiful footage of the 1910 World Series, and his woeful ignorance—or poetic indifference to factual correctness—causes him to make three inexcusable mistakes—*within fifteen seconds*! When the narration refers to pitcher Albert Bender, "a Chippewa Indian and therefore known as Chief," the film cuts to first-baseman Harry Davis tossing the ball. "The so-called '$100,000 Infield' of Stuffy McInnis, Eddie Collins, Black Jack Barry, and Frank Baker" of 1911 is illustrated by Barry, Collins, Baker, and Harry Davis in 1910. And as the narration describes "Frank Baker, who led the league with twelve home runs," we see a right-handed batter . . . hitting what Burns leads us to believe is a home run. Baker, a left-handed batter, did not hit a home run in this series. Does Burns have any idea what he is doing here? Does he care? . . .

"The true howler," wrote Nabokov, "is a joint product of ignorance and self-assurance." Mr. Burns is truly blessed in both these areas, and his howlers are abundant and authentic. Thus his *Baseball*, which should have been a thrilling home run, turns out to be an endless limping trot down the foul line.

NEAL MCCABE
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I greatly enjoyed George Weigel's article, . . . which I found scholarly and well-written, with an obvious love and appreciation of the game of baseball and what the game has meant to him and to most Americans.

I, too, while finding Ken Burns's eighteen hours on the subject of baseball a remarkable project, felt strongly that it was marred by continual expressions of "white guilt" and attempts to make others feel the same guilt. Mr. Weigel's article is the first I have read which discusses this shortcoming so frankly. . . .

There is good reason why baseball is the "all-American game": it was invented and developed here. Playing it requires no unusual physique . . . and at least eighteen people can participate, plus an umpire, coaches, and substitutes. And it is fun to watch, with the result not known until the third strike at the end of the ninth inning. . . .

I grew up in the small upstate town of Troy, New York. Midway between Troy and Albany was the home of the Albany Senators, a team that was many years in the Eastern League, single-A baseball, and finally in the International League, triple-A baseball, a level not too far from the major leagues. My father, a devoted fan, took off from his twelve-or-more-hours-a-day business for an infrequent game, and I can still smell the strong mustard on the hot dogs, and remember the seventh-inning stretch. . . .

ROBERT J. ROSENTHAL
Washington, D.C.

GEORGE WEIGEL writes:

I thank Neal McCabe and Robert J. Rosenthal for their kind words, which will be of some comfort this spring as I contemplate the horror of scab baseball with "replacement players."

Readers may wish to know that Mr. McCabe is the co-author, with his sister, Constance, of perhaps the most elegant of baseball photo-histories, *Baseball's Golden Age: The Photographs of Charles W. Conlon*, which is published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

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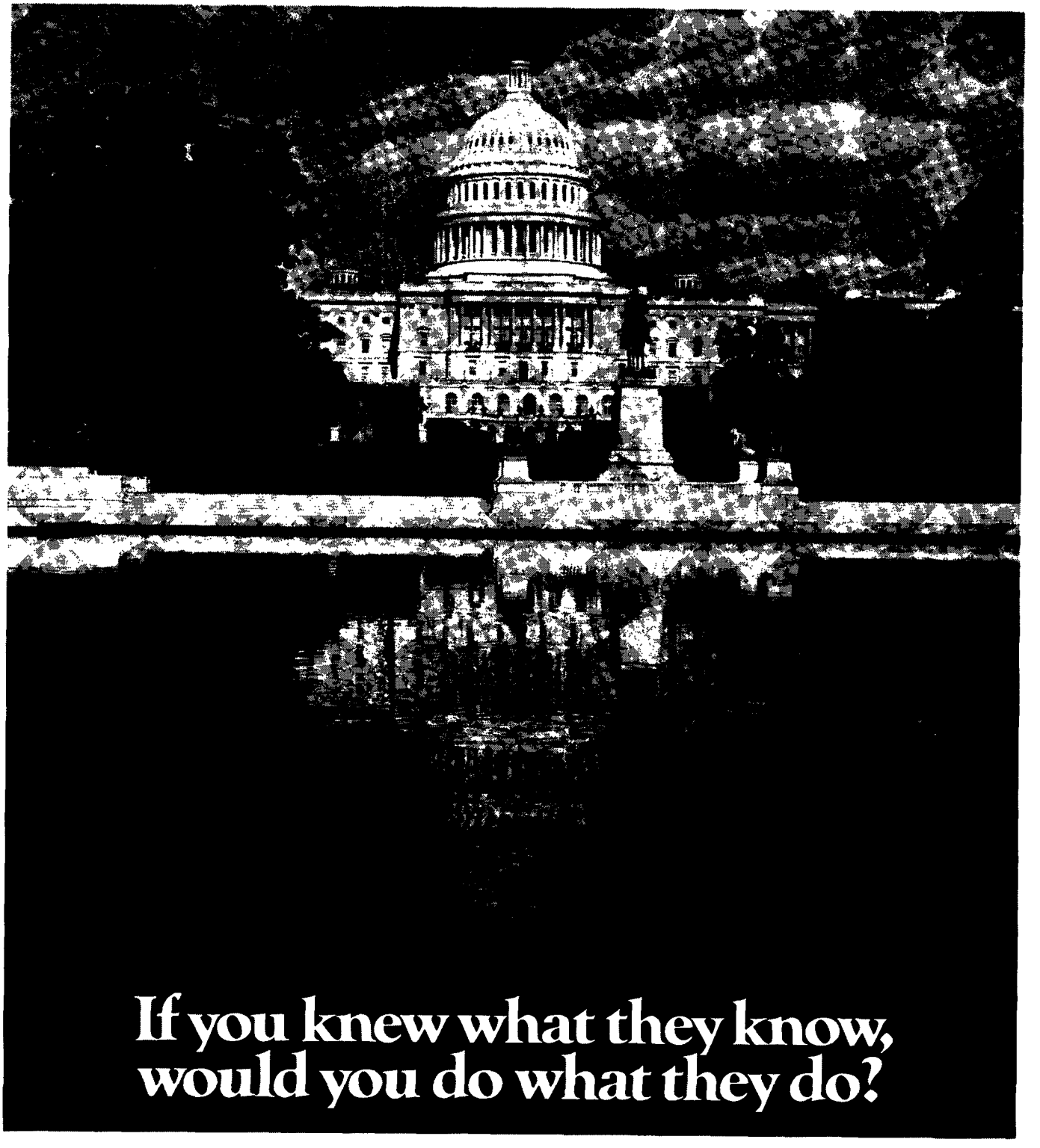

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What To Do About the Children

William J. Bennett

AT THE dawn of the 20th century there was every reason to believe that ours would be (in the title of a best-selling book at the time) "the century of the child." From the early part of the 1900's through the 1950's, despite ups and downs, despite Depression and war, things got better in almost every area touching the welfare of American children: economic security improved, material earnings increased, medicine progressed, family structure was stable, children occupied a valued place in society, and our civic institutions were strong and resilient. In retrospect, it seems as if the midpoint of the century was a high point for the well-being of children.

By the 1960's, however, America began a steep and uninterrupted slide toward what might be called decivilization. Although every stratum of society has been affected, the worst problems have been concentrated within America's inner cities. No age group has remained untouched, but the most punishing blows have been absorbed by children.

In assessing conditions today, it is important to keep perspective: America is *not* in danger of becoming a third-world country; the vast majority of children do not live in sewers of disease and depravity; and most are not violent, sexually promiscuous, or drug-takers. At the same time, however, there is no question that as we approach the end of the last decade of this "American century," the condition of too many of our children is not good. The indicators are well-known: low educational achievement, the decline of the two-parent family, moral confusion, and, for a sizable and increasingly large minority, abuse, neglect, and very bleak prospects for the future.

Consider some real-world facts:

- From 1960 to 1991, the rate of homicide deaths among children under the age of 19 more than quadrupled. Among black teenagers, homicide is now by far the leading cause of death.
- Since 1965, the juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes has tripled, and the fastest-growing segment of the criminal population is made up of children.
- Since 1960, the rate at which teenagers take their own lives has more than tripled.
- The rate of births to unmarried teenagers has increased by almost 200 percent in three decades; the number of unmarried teenagers getting pregnant has nearly doubled in the past two decades.
- Today, 30 percent of all births and almost 70 percent of all black births are illegitimate. By the end of the decade, according to the most reliable projections, 40 percent of all American births and 80 percent of all minority births will be out-of-wedlock.
- During the last 30 years there has been a tripling of the percentage of children living in single-parent families. According to some projections, only 30 percent of white children and only 6 percent of black children born in 1980 will live with both parents through the age of 18.

A useful historical reference point may be 1965, when Daniel P. Moynihan, then an Assistant Secretary of Labor, wrote *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action.* Then, one-quarter of all black children were born out of wedlock; one-half of all black children lived in broken homes at some time before they reached age 18; and 14 percent of black children were on welfare. Moynihan considered this "tangle of pathologies" to be a social catastrophe, and so it was. Today, however, were we to achieve such figures in even one of our major urban centers, we would consider it a stunning accomplishment.

As the figures above demonstrate, these problems are by no means limited to lower-class or minority populations. In addition to everything else, divorce, rampant in all social classes, causes over one million children annually to end up, at least temporarily, in single-parent families. And wherever they live, American children today—especially the teenagers among them—spend rela-

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WILLIAM J. BENNETT served as Secretary of Education under President Reagan and as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy under President Bush. He is now co-director of Empower America. Among his recent books are *The Book of Virtues* and *The Devaluing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children.*

The present article is the seventh in a series which was inaugurated in September 1994 by James Q. Wilson on crime and which then continued with Gertrude Himmelfarb on the universities, Chester E. Finn, Jr. on the schools (both in October 1994), Eliot A. Cohen on national defense (November 1994), Charles Murray on welfare (December 1994), and Robert H. Bork on the First Amendment (February 1995). Two more contributions to this series appear below: Linda Chavez on immigration (p. 29) and Richard Pipes on the CIA (p. 36). A number of others will follow in the months ahead.

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tively minuscule amounts of time with either their fathers or their mothers—or their homework—and vastly greater amounts of time on other things, from crime to television.

A few years ago a special commission of political, medical, educational, and business leaders issued a report on the health of America's teenagers titled *Code Blue*. In the words of this report, "Never before has one generation of American teenagers been less healthy, less cared for, or less prepared for life than their parents were at the same age." According to the sociologist David Popenoe, today's generation of children is the first in our nation's history to be less well-off psychologically and socially than its parents.

Nor is the concern limited to the experts. When asked in a recent Family Research Council poll, "Do you think children are generally better off today or worse off than when you were a child?," 60 percent of all Americans—and 77 percent of all black Americans—said children today are "worse off." They are right.

II

THE greatest long-term threat to the well-being of our children is the enfeebled condition—in some sectors of our society, the near-complete collapse—of our character-forming institutions. In a free society, families, schools, and churches have primary responsibility for shaping the moral sensibilities of the young. The influence of these institutions is determinative; when they no longer provide moral instruction or lose their moral authority, there is very little that other auxiliaries—particularly the federal government—can do.

Among those three institutions, the family is preeminent; it is, as Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute once famously said, the original and best department of health, education, and welfare. But the family today is an agency in disrepair. Writes David Popenoe:

> This period [the 1960's through the 1990's] has witnessed an unprecedented decline of the family as a social institution. Families have lost functions, social power, and authority over their members. They have grown smaller in size, less stable, and shorter in life span. . . . Moreover, there has been a weakening of child-centeredness in American society and culture. Familism as a cultural value has diminished.

And so, too, has fatherhood. Each night in America, four out of ten children go to sleep without fathers who live in their homes, and upward of 60 percent will spend some major part of their childhood without fathers.

In the past, the typical cause of fatherlessness was divorce; its new face is homes headed by never-married mothers. This is "the most socially consequential family trend of our generation" (in the words of David Blankenhorn of the Institute for American Values), and it has seismic social implications. Moynihan warned 30 years ago that a society which allows a large number of young men to grow up without fathers in their lives asks for and almost always gets chaos. We have come to the point in America where we are asking prisons to do for many young boys what fathers used to do.

THERE are other signs of decay, particularly of the cultural variety. Television shows make a virtue of promiscuity, adultery, homosexuality, and gratuitous acts of violence. Rap music celebrates the abuse and torture of women. Advertisements are increasingly erotic, even perverse. And many of our most successful and critically-acclaimed movies celebrate brutality, casual cruelty, and twisted sex.

None of these trends takes place in a moral or cultural vacuum. During the last 30 years we have witnessed a profound shift in public attitudes. The pollster Daniel Yankelovich finds that we Americans now place less value on what we owe others as a matter of moral obligation; less value on sacrifice as a moral good, on social conformity, respectability, and observing the rules; less value on correctness and restraint in matters of physical pleasure and sexuality—and correlatively greater value on things like self-expression, individualism, self-realization, and personal choice.

How does all this affect young children? A single, simple statistic tells much: if, in 1951, 51 percent of Americans agreed with the statement, "Parents who don't get along should not stay together for the children," in 1985 that figure had risen to 86 percent.

The social historian Barbara Dafoe Whitehead has observed that the Hallmark company now offers two lines of divorce cards: one set for the newly single adults, the other for children of divorced parents. For the latter, a typical message is piercing in its casualness: "I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me but I hope you know I'm always just a phone call away." By contrast, one adult card reads, "Think of your former marriage as a record album. It was full of music—both happy and sad. But what's important now is . . . YOU! the recently released HOT NEW SINGLE! You're going to be at the TOP OF THE CHARTS!" As Whitehead comments, "What had once been regarded as hostile to children's best interests is now considered essential to adults' happiness."

If the self, in the late Allan Bloom's withering assessment, has become "the modern substitute for the soul," we are also living in an era in which it has become unfashionable to make judgments on a whole range of behaviors and attitudes. This unwillingness to judge has resulted in unilateral moral disarmament, as harmful in the cultural realm as its counterpart is in the military. With the removal of social sanctions in the name of "tolerance" and "open-mindedness," and the de-

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valuing of the idea of personal responsibility, is it any wonder, for instance, that in a recent survey 70 percent of young people between the ages of 18 and 34 said that people who generate a baby out-of-wedlock should not be subject to moral reproach *of any sort*?

It would be supererogatory at this late date to catalogue the role of government in giving form and force to these ideas and beliefs through law and policy. Suffice it to say that from the area of criminal justice, to education, to welfare policy, to the arts, to a whole tangle of sexual and family issues, government has increasingly put itself on the side of the forces of decomposition, not on the side of the forces of restoration. The consequence is that the moral universe we are sending our children into today is more harsh, more vulgar, more coarse, and more violent than the moral universe most of us grew up in—and they are less equipped to deal with it.

We should not flinch from admitting this unsettling truth: we live in a culture which seems dedicated to the corruption of the young, to assuring the loss of their innocence before their time. "It dawned on me recently," the anthropologist David Murray has written, "that we have now become the kind of society that in the 19th century almost every Christian denomination felt compelled to missionize."

III

If the problem is one of moral breakdown, it would be fatuous to suggest that it can be fixed by government intervention. There is, after all, one proposition which has been tested repeatedly over the last three decades and just as repeatedly been found wanting—namely, that we can spend our way out of our social problems. Instead of encouraging government, we need to relimit it—not only, or even primarily, for fiscal reasons, but because the "nanny state" has eroded self-reliance and encouraged dependency, crowding out the character-forming institutions and enfeebling us as citizens.

Still, there are a number of actions government *can* take that would amount to constructive and far-reaching, even radical, reforms. A number of these ideas have been on the table for quite some time, but as the results of the November 1994 elections suggest, Americans may be more ready for fundamental reform today than at any other point in recent history. So we suddenly find ourselves presented with an extraordinary opportunity.

Before getting down to particulars, I would stipulate two general points that should guide any discussion of public-policy solutions to the problems faced by children in America. One of them I borrow from an old principle of medicine: *primum non nocere*—first, do no harm. In many, many cases, the best thing government can do is (to quote Myron Magnet of the *City Journal*) "to *stop* doing what makes the problem worse."

As for the second point, it was well expressed by Alexander Hamilton, who in *The Federalist No. 17* questioned whether "all those things . . . which are proper to be provided for by local legislation [should] ever be desirable cares of a general jurisdiction." To state this in terms of our present situation, there are many responsibilities which would be better handled by states and localities but which have fallen under the jurisdiction of the federal government; they should be devolved back to the smaller "laboratories of democracy."

Within those constraints, government, at one level or another, does have a role to play in improving conditions for the young. Let us look at a few key areas, beginning with the link between welfare and illegitimacy.

Between 1962 and 1992, welfare spending in the United States increased by over 900 percent in 1992 dollars. At the same time, the poverty rate dropped by less than 5 percent—and illegitimacy rates increased over 400 percent. Children are the real victims in this national tragedy. They are being conditioned into the same habits of dependence they are surrounded by, resulting in an almost unbreakable cycle of welfare and "the tangle of pathologies" associated with it.

John J. DiIulio, Jr. of Princeton has put this last point well:

> The problem *is* that inner-city children are trapped in criminogenic homes, schools, and neighborhoods where high numbers of teenagers and adults are no more likely to nurture, teach, and care for children than they are to expose them to neglect, abuse, and violence. . . . Children cannot be socialized by adults who are themselves unsocialized (or worse), families that exist in name only, schools that do not educate, and neighborhoods in which violent and repeat criminals circulate in and out of jail. . . .

Quite a number of serious and thoughtful proposals have been advanced for restructuring the entire system of welfare benefits, of which Charles Murray's is among the most thoroughgoing.* In a similar spirit, I would endorse full-scale and far-reaching plans to send welfare back to the states, which have proved the best settings for innovative reform and experimentation.

As for the problem of illegitimacy in particular, one year after legislation is enacted I would recommend ending direct welfare payments to women who have children out of wedlock; enforcing existing child-support laws; and terminating the increase in benefits for women who have children while participating in welfare programs. The success of such reforms, it seems to me, de-

* "What To Do About Welfare," COMMENTARY, December 1994.

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pends critically on their sweep and magnitude; incremental steps will not do the necessary job of altering fundamental assumptions and expectations.

To turn to a point that has been heavily controverted since the elections of November 8: in my view, situations will arise which may warrant the removal of a child from the care of his parent(s). To be sure, this should only happen in desperate circumstances and as a last resort. But we cannot ignore the plain fact that there are more and more horrifying cases of abuse, neglect, and parental malfeasence.

While adoption is the best alternative in such circumstances, the concept of orphanages, or group-care homes, should not be dismissed. Such institutions pretty much disappeared from the national scene when government began distributing money in the expectation that poor parents, with federal assistance, would do a better job of raising their children. But in far too many cases that expectation has been resoundingly refuted by experience.

When parents cannot care for their children's basic material, psychological, medical, and moral needs, it is time to look to other institutions. The orphanage—call it a boarding school without tuition—may then be in their best interest. Can anyone seriously argue that some boys would be worse off living in Boys Town than in, say, the Cabrini Green housing project in Chicago, considered by its residents a virtual war zone?

BUT adoption is certainly preferable. Only 50,000 children are adopted each year in the United States; half are healthy infants and half are older children or children with disabilities. At any given time, however, one to two million homes are waiting to adopt. Provided only the child is young enough, there is, in effect, no such thing as an unwanted child, and this goes even for babies who are not fully healthy. Unfortunately, most potential adopters (and adoptees) are hamstrung by needless barriers.

In addition to the high cost of a private adoption, often as much as $10,000, many couples are automatically excluded from consideration due to race, financial background, age, disability, or home size. Other potential adopters are scared away by lax confidentiality laws, nonbinding adoptions, and the expanded rights of the biological father to reclaim legal custody.

The barriers to adoption are only one side of the problem. Availability is also severely limited. Unwed mothers are often denied information about adoption in prenatal counseling; others decide to abort their pregnancy for economic reasons. (Indeed, it may be partly for this reason that abortion has increasingly become a problem of juveniles: of the one million teenage pregnancies each year, about 400,000 now end in abortion.)* Finally, and perhaps most importantly, with the stigma of illegitimacy all but gone in this country, for many young, unwed, pregnant women single motherhood has become a more attractive option than giving a child up for adoption.

Again, there is a limit to what government can do. But again, too, the greatest hope lies in reforms at the state level, such as:

- prohibiting the use of race and/or ethnicity as a disqualification for would-be foster or adoptive parents (in practice this has affected whites seeking to adopt nonwhite babies);
- expediting adoption procedures for infants and children who have been abandoned by their parents and are living in limbo in hospitals, group homes, and/or foster care;
- terminating parental rights and thus making a child available for adoption if by the age of six months—in the case of infants born with positive toxicology—maternal drug use has not ceased, or if a child has been severely abused by its parents;
- enacting model legislation that will require courts to consider the best interests of the child first in all cases concerning custody;
- establishing uniform rules making voluntary surrender/adoption irrevocable at any point past 72 hours after birth;
- restricting payments to biological parents by adoptive parents to necessary expenses related directly to the pregnancy and adoption;
- ensuring that adoptive families are treated with the same respect as other families, free of the fear of intrusion by the state or other parties after an adoption has been finalized.

THEN there is divorce—which, in terms of damage to children, can be the most devastating circumstance of all, yet which is conspicuous by its absence from the agenda of policy-makers.

As Karl Zinsmeister of the *American Enterprise* has written: "We talk about the drug crisis, the education crisis, and the problems of teen pregnancy and juvenile crime. But all these ills trace back predominantly to one source: broken families."

The statistics, indeed, are chilling. Children of single-parent families are twice as likely to drop out of high school, or, if they remain in school, have lower grade-point averages, lower college aspirations, and poorer attendance records than the general population. Girls living with only one parent are two-and-a-half times more likely to become teenage mothers. When it comes to

* Although abortion *per se* is not one of my subjects in this article, let me register here my belief that 1.5 million abortions a year—of which the overwhelming majority are performed on perfectly healthy women in order to prevent the birth of perfectly healthy children—is a national catastrophe. There is no doubt that such a number must also have a coarsening effect on adults' attitudes toward children and what they need from us.

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crime, according to some studies, 70 percent of juveniles now incarcerated in state-reform institutions have lived either in single-parent homes or with someone other than their natural parents, and 75 percent of adolescent murderers come from single-parent homes.

The divorce rate has nearly doubled since 1960—not coincidentally, the same period in which no-fault divorce laws became popular. Previously, before a divorce was granted, the law had required a showing of fault, such as cruelty, abuse, adultery, or desertion. The recision of these conditions not only significantly increased the number of divorces but transformed marriage into a simple business contract.

Though the incidence of divorce cannot significantly be addressed through public policy, its effects can perhaps be curbed to some degree. My suggestions include braking mechanisms when children are involved, such as mandatory and substantial "cooling-off" periods as well as mandatory counseling; reinstituting fault as an absolute requirement for divorce and in determining the terms of a settlement; and classifying all property as family property, which would affect the distribution of assets in cases where children are involved.

THIS brings us to institutions outside the home, starting with the schools. Parents all over the country are increasingly aware that the public-education system in America is an embarrassment. As the federal government has taken over more responsibilities for the nation's schools, the quality of education has plummeted. The response of the education establishment and of the teachers' unions to this situation, and to the growing movement for greater parental involvement and local control that has arisen in response to it, has been to advocate pumping more money into the system. This has only served to perpetuate and even escalate the problem.

The signs of failure are everywhere, and need not be reiterated here.* Fortunately, there are many potentially good solutions—though more money is not among them. Instead, and yet again, a devolution is in order: the first step toward genuine education reform should be to rein in the federal government. In my judgment, legislation is called for which would restore decision-making responsibilities to state and local authorities, enabling the federal government to give states a block grant with virtually no strings attached. The state, local school districts, and parents would then be in a better position to make their own decisions regarding curriculum, books, standards, discipline, etc. Not only would this lead to a system more accountable to parents, but it would encourage innovation and experimentation.

The next step is to implement reforms at the state level which would foster excellence in the education system. These include open enrollment; charter schools; privatization; performance-testing for students and teachers; a merit-pay system for teachers and administrators; and, above all, school choice, complete with vouchers redeemable at public, private, and religious schools. And to prevent a future trend toward regulatory authority, the federal Department of Education should be dismantled. The limited functions of the department should be carried out by the executive branch in an office of education policy.

WHAT about crime? Between 1985 and 1991, the annual rate at which young men aged 15 to 19 were being killed increased by 154 percent, far surpassing the rate of change in any other group. Twenty percent of high-school students now carry a knife, razor, firearm, or other weapon on a regular basis. As James Q. Wilson recently pointed out, "Youngsters are shooting at people at a far higher rate than at any time in recent history."† Or, in the words of Senator Bill Bradley, "The murderers are younger, the guns more high-powered, and the acts themselves occur more and more randomly." This problem will almost certainly get worse before it gets better, as by the end of the decade there will be a half-million more American males between the ages of 14 and 17 than there are today, 30,000 of whom will probably become high-rate offenders.

The justice system spends $20 billion a year to arrest, rehabilitate, and jail juvenile offenders, only to watch 70 percent of them commit crimes again. Here, too, money is evidently not the panacea. Genuine reform of our juvenile-justice laws, which for the most part should take place on the state level, would involve keeping records of juvenile arrests, fingerprinting offenders, and making these records available to adult courts to prevent juvenile criminals from being treated as first-time offenders when they reach the age of 18. I would also strongly recommend legislation at the state level to allow juveniles, 14 or older, to be charged as adults for certain crimes—such as murder, rape, armed robbery, and assault with a firearm.

Genuine reform would also establish consistent, graduated punishments for every offense. It would insist on building and maintaining the facilities needed to keep violent offenders off the streets. It would speed up the criminal-justice system by enacting and enforcing realistic trial provisions. It would prohibit irresponsible judges from unilaterally imposing measures (such as "prison caps") which release violent and repeat offenders back onto the streets. It would

* Chester E. Finn, Jr., in "What To Do About Education: The Schools" (COMMENTARY, October 1994), provides a long list of the appalling details.

† "What To Do About Crime," COMMENTARY, September 1994.

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require offenders to pay restitution to their victims. And it would create extended sentences in institutional boot camps for repeat offenders and those who failed to participate in the community-service and public-works programs to which they had been sentenced.

A SPECIAL subcategory of the overall crime problem is drugs. From the mid-1980's until 1991, significant progress was made on the drug front, with researchers tracking a sharp decline in overall use. But in 1991 use began to rise, and drugs are still a major problem among the young.

According to the latest study from the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, one in four students has used illegal drugs before reaching high school; among 8th graders, 13 percent say they have smoked marijuana in the last year, *double* the rate of 1991; and over 40 percent of all 10th graders and nearly 50 percent of all 12th graders have used some illicit drug, including LSD, inhalants, stimulants, barbiturates, and cocaine and crack. This, in the words of the study's principal investigator, Lloyd D. Johnston, is "a problem that is getting worse at a fairly rapid pace," and it is being abetted by a decline in peer disapproval and a general softening of teenagers' attitudes toward drug use.

While the Clinton administration has not formally abandoned the war against drugs, it has abandoned it for all practical purposes. This could have a dire effect on what has already been achieved, incomplete as that is. If we mean to continue our efforts, we will need to do a number of things. They include allowing communities to choose their own anti-drug priorities by combining federal anti-drug support with that from states and localities; putting the U.S. military in charge of stopping the flow of illegal drugs from abroad, and giving the military control over the entire interdiction process; establishing trade and diplomatic sanctions and eliminating aid to cocaine-source countries that fail to reduce their production of cocaine by 10 percent per year, and by at least 50 percent in five years; and requiring the Attorney General first to identify all major drug-trafficking organizations known to be operating in the U.S. and then to create a plan to dismantle them.

IV

DRAWING up laundry lists of public policy may seem a tedious and academic exercise. It is nevertheless an instructive one, if for no other reason than that it glaringly exposes how *little* has been done, on the most commonsensical level, to address the terrible problems that confront us, and that have accumulated in both number and intensity over the past 30 years. In this sense, thinking concretely about specific, practical reforms offers the hope that, by a concerted national effort, we might yet begin to alleviate some of the worst manifestations of these ills, and even, in time, to reverse course.

And yet, to repeat, even if we were to enact each and every one of the desired reforms in each and every area, we would still be a long way from having healed the broken families of America. Smart, intelligent public policies can and do make a difference. But political solutions are not, ultimately, the answer to problems which are at root moral and spiritual.

"Manners," wrote Edmund Burke two centuries ago,

> are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and color to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them.

Can government supply manners and morals if they are wanting? Of course it cannot. What it can supply, through policy and law, is a vivid sense of what we as a society expect of ourselves, what we hold ourselves responsible for, and what we consider ourselves answerable to. There can be little doubt that in this last period of time the message our laws have been sending our young people and their parents has been the profoundly demoralizing one that we expect little, and hold ourselves answerable for still less.

By changing and improving our laws, we might not thereby bring about, but we would certainly *help* to bring about, a climate that would make it easier rather than harder for all of us to grow more civilized; easier rather than harder for us to keep our commitments to one another; easier rather than harder for us to recapture the idea of personal and civic responsibility. This, in turn, would make it easier rather than harder for us to raise our children in safety to adulthood—something which at the moment we are not doing very well at all.

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What To Do About Immigration

Linda Chavez

DESPITE overwhelming opposition from the media, from leaders of the religious and civil-rights communities, from the education establishment, and even from prominent conservatives like Jack Kemp and William J. Bennett, California voters last fall enthusiastically adopted Proposition 187, which bars illegal aliens from receiving welfare, education, or health benefits except for emergency medical treatment.

The anger toward illegal immigrants had grown steadily among Californians in recent years, fueled both by the huge number of illegal aliens living in the state—nearly two million, or about half of the country's entire illegal population—and by the state's lingering economic recession. And the resentment had deepened as the apparent costs of providing benefits to illegal aliens rose; for the fiscal year 1994-95, that figure is estimated to stand at $2.35 billion. California, moreover, had gone far beyond what was required by federal law in granting benefits to illegal aliens, including in-state tuition in the Cal-State University system and free prenatal care.

As if all this were not tinder enough, in mid-October 70,000 mostly Latin demonstrators marched through downtown Los Angeles waving Mexican and Guatemalan flags and shouting *Viva la Raza*. Tracking polls, which had shown Proposition 187 ahead by only 5 points just prior to the demonstration, registered a fourfold jump in the three days immediately following.

Proposition 187's success has inspired activists in several other states to consider similar measures, but their plans may be derailed if the law is declared unconstitutional. (A federal court has enjoined California from enforcing Proposition 187, pending the outcome of a suit.) Nonetheless, the proposal's popularity has launched a long-overdue national debate on immigration—legal as well as illegal.

LIKE so much American social policy, immigration policy is a monument to the law of unintended consequences. Although assurances to the contrary were offered by the legislators responsible for the last major overhaul of the nation's immigration law, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, that law profoundly altered both the makeup and the size of the immigrant flow. Until 1965, most immigrants came from Europe; today, some 80 percent of those legally admitted are from Asia or Latin America. The new law also significantly increased the pool of eligible applicants by giving preference to family members of immigrants already here.

But these changes might not have had such striking effects had they not coincided with dramatic developments in civil-rights law and with the expansion of the welfare state. As it is, immigration now intersects with two of the most troubling issues of our time: race and entitlements.

In 1993 (the last year for which figures are available), over 800,000 legal immigrants were admitted to the United States and an estimated 300,000 illegal aliens settled here, more or less permanently. Over the last decade, as many as ten million legal and illegal immigrants established permanent residence—a number higher than at any period in our history, including the peak immigration decade of 1900-10.

To be sure, these numbers are somewhat misleading: because our population is so much larger now than it was at the beginning of the century, the rate of immigration is much lower, barely one-third of what it was then. And while the proportion of persons living in the U.S. who are foreign-born is high by recent standards—about 8 percent in the last census—it is still lower than it was for every decade between 1850 and 1950.

The numbers alone, however, do not fully describe the dimensions of the immigration issue. Americans are not just concerned about the size of the immigrant population; they are worried about the kind of people who are coming, how they got here, and whether they are likely to become a benefit or a burden to our society. There is deep suspicion that today's immigrants are fundamentally different from earlier waves. In recent polls, 59 percent of Americans say that immigration was good for the country in the past, but only 29 percent think it is a good thing now. Former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm, who favors restricting immigration, summed up this national ambivalence: "I know that earlier large waves of immigrants didn't 'overturn' America,

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but there are . . . reasons to believe that today's migration is different from earlier flows."

Immigration enthusiasts (among whom I count myself, albeit with some important reservations) like to point out that Americans have never been eager to accept new arrivals, for all our rhetoric about being an "immigrant nation." As Rita Simon of the American University law school noted recently, "We view immigrants with rose-colored glasses, turned backward." Perhaps, then, there is nothing much new in the worries so many people express about whether this generation of immigrants will indeed assimilate to American norms. But comforting as the thought may be that today's Mexicans, Vietnamese, Pakistanis, and Filipinos are the equivalent of yesterday's Italians, Jews, Poles, and Irish, it fails to take into account the tremendous transformation America itself has undergone in the last half-century.

THE America to which Europeans immigrated—first northern Europeans in the 19th century and then southern and eastern Europeans in the first quarter of the 20th—was a self-confident, culturally homogeneous nation. There was never any question that immigrants would be expected to learn English and to conform to the laws, customs, and traditions of their new country (although even then, some immigration restrictionists questioned whether certain groups were capable of such conformity). And immigrants themselves—especially their children—eagerly wanted to adapt. Public schools taught newcomers not only a new language, but new dress, manners, history, myths, and even hygiene to transform them into Americans who sounded, looked, acted, thought, and smelled the part.

In those days there were no advocates insisting that America must accommodate itself to the immigrants; the burden of change rested solely with the new arrivals. To be sure, by their sheer numbers they managed subtly to alter certain features of their new country. Because of them, the U.S. is less Protestant than it would otherwise have been; no doubt American cuisine and art are richer; and the pantheon of American heroes from Christopher Columbus to Joe DiMaggio to Albert Einstein is more diverse. Still, until fairly recently, Americans—native-stock or of later lineage—understood what it meant to be American, and it meant roughly the same thing regardless of where one's ancestors came from.

We are far less sure what it means to be American today. Thus the question, "What to do about immigration?" is inextricably wound up with how we define our national identity.

Some critics of immigration—most notably John O'Sullivan, the editor of *National Review*, and Peter Brimelow, author of the forthcoming *Alien Nation*—believe that national identity must be defined in explicitly racial and ethnic terms and that the current high levels of nonwhite immigration will drastically alter that identity. O'Sullivan argues:

> A nation is an ethno-cultural unit—a body that begins its life as a cultural in-gathering but, by dint of common history, habits, tastes, shared experiences, tales, songs, memories, and, above all, intermarriage, becomes progressively more like an extended family—that is, more ethnic—over time.

As long as America's core remained overwhelmingly Wasp, so this argument goes, it was possible for Italian Catholics or Russian Jews or Japanese Buddhists to become American. Both O'Sullivan and Brimelow fear, however, that the large numbers of nonwhites who are now coming in will undermine the assimilative capacity of the nation; they both cite Census Bureau projections that the majority of the U.S. population will become nonwhite (or more accurately, non-Hispanic white) by the year 2050; and they both blame current immigration policy for this portentous outcome.

But is race or ethnicity really the issue? If so, O'Sullivan and Brimelow can relax. Yes, the majority of immigrants admitted to the U.S. in the last twenty years have been relatively dark-skinned Mexicans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Chinese, Koreans, etc. Yet by the year 2050, their great grandchildren are unlikely to look much like them. Intermarriage rates in the U.S. have never been higher; nor have mixed-race births. The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) recently touted this development in its monthly newsletter in a front-page article, "Interracial Baby Boomlet in Progress?" Births to mixed Japanese/white couples now exceed those to all-Japanese couples. There are now so many ethnically-mixed persons in the U.S. that the Census Bureau is debating whether to create a special classification for them. (Perhaps it should consider calling the category "American.") Not even groups with strong traditions or religious prohibitions against intermarriage seem exempt from the trend. About half of all American Jews, for example, marry non-Jews.

Nor is the inclination to intermarry diminishing among more recent immigrant groups. One-third of young, U.S.-born Hispanics marry non-Hispanics; and perhaps more significantly, nearly half of all Hispanics consider themselves white. Peter Brimelow dismisses this phenomenon, noting that those of Mexican origin, who make up nearly two-thirds of the entire group, are predominantly Indian. But he misses the point. By defining themselves as white, Hispanics are identifying with the majority. In a recent survey, a majority of Hispanics said the group with which they felt they had most in common was whites, and so did Asians.

IN SHORT, the problem of national identity is not primarily connected with heredity or ethnicity. It is, rather, a function

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of culture. But on this score, the evidence is decidedly less reassuring.

From the White House to Madison Avenue to Main Street, the idea has taken hold that the United States is a multicultural society. Many doubt that such a thing as American culture even exists. When I recently told a university audience that American blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and whites have more in common with one another than they do with their contemporaries in any of their ancestral homelands, the students literally gasped in disbelief. "I don't know what you mean by 'American culture,' " one young Puerto Rican woman told me. "I have a right to my own culture and language." She said this, however, in perfect English, leaving me wondering just what culture and language she might be referring to.

But if the irony of her situation escaped this particular student—whose coloring and features suggested predominantly Spanish ancestry—her political statement was clear. A European-looking, English-speaking Hispanic who chooses to reject American culture, she represents the flip side of the large number of brown-skinned Hispanics who see themselves as white. It is hard to know how many such persons there are, but their numbers are surely growing as ethnicity becomes increasingly politicized.

Into this confusing mix come immigrants who, unlike these *ersatz* ethnics, truly are culturally different from those around them. And such are the misgivings of the rest of us that we no longer seem able or willing to help these newcomers become Americans. Public schools, which worked to acculturate previous immigrant groups, now see it as their mission to preserve immigrant languages and culture. The Los Angeles school system, which educates more Latino immigrant children than any in the nation, prides itself on teaching these youngsters primarily in Spanish for three years or more. Denver public-school officials recently ordered one local high school to stop teaching 450 Hispanic youngsters in English, and transferred out 51 Asian students so that the school could concentrate on its Spanish bilingual program. The demand for Spanish-speaking teachers is so great that districts from Los Angeles to Chicago have begun importing instructors from Mexico, Spain, and Puerto Rico; in 1993, Mexico signed an agreement with California to provide both teachers and 40,000 textbooks for the state's Spanish-language classrooms.

Yet bilingual education did not originally grow out of the pressures of immigration. It started as a small, federally funded program to help Mexican-American children (largely native-born) in the Southwest, and it was already in place years before the large influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants in the 1970's and 80's. Its chief sponsor, former Senator Ralph Yarborough (D-Tex), declared that the purpose of his bilingual-education bill was not "to create pockets of different languages throughout the country . . . but just to try to make [Mexican-American] children fully literate in English." By 1975, however, civil-rights enforcement agencies in Washington were insisting (on the basis of a Supreme Court ruling involving the Civil Rights Act of 1964) that school districts teach "language-minority" youngsters, mostly Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, in Spanish or face a cut-off of all federal funds.

In the early stages of the program, the overwhelming majority of students in bilingual classes were U.S.-born; today, nearly 60 percent still are. What is more, many of these children are more fluent in English than Spanish—no one knows exactly how many, because most states use an arbitrary cut-off score (usually the 30th or 40th percentile) on a standardized English test to place Hispanic youngsters in Spanish-language programs, rather than testing to see whether they are more fluent in English or in Spanish.

BILINGUAL voting ballots, which are now mandated by the federal government, were also an outgrowth not of immigration but of civil-rights legislation—in this case, the 1975 Amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1965—and they too were aimed at a U.S.-born population: namely, Mexican-Americans living in the Southwest. The main impetus behind the amendments was to give Washington the same power to oversee federal elections in areas where Hispanics lived as the original Act gave it over the Deep South, where egregious efforts were being made to prevent blacks from voting.

Since few Spanish-speaking immigrants naturalize and since few can therefore vote, the 1975 amendments have had little effect on them. But thanks to additional amendments adopted in 1982, and a series of court decisions, the Voting Rights Act is now used mainly to create districts which pack in as many Hispanics (or blacks) as feasible in order to assure the election of minority candidates. This practice has received widespread publicity because of the often bizarrely gerrymandered districts that result, but what is less well-known is that immigrants—including illegal aliens—often make up the majority of persons entitled to representation in these new Hispanic districts.

So far, at least, the Act has not been invoked to create safe districts for Asians, although in principle they qualify under the same "language-minority" designation as Hispanics. The law already requires federal ballots to be printed in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, among other languages; and the huge increase in the Asian immigrant population in California probably means that the courts will before long use their presence to justify the need for safe seats for Asians. Since Asians are too widely dispersed for simple ethnic gerrymandering to suffice, we may expect the courts to order new remedies such as cumulative voting. This technique, which allows voters to cast multiple ballots for a single candidate in a multi-

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member, at-large race, would, for example, enable Asians comprising only 14 percent of the electorate in a given city to elect one representative on a six-member city council even if no whites voted for the Asian candidate.

THE manipulation of both the Bilingual Education Act and the Voting Rights Act points to a central problem of our present immigration policy: the current confluence of ethnic-based entitlements and the large influx of newcomers eligible to receive them creates an ever-growing demand for such programs.

One solution, favored by those who want to restrict immigration for other reasons, is to cut off the flow of immigrants. Yet while this might diminish the clientele for ethnic entitlements, the programs would continue to serve the native-born populations for whom they were originally created. For it is not immigrants who clamor for these programs. Asian immigrants, for one, have largely eschewed bilingual education in favor of English-immersion programs. Even some Latino immigrant parents have staged protests in California, New York, and New Jersey upon discovering that their children were being taught in Spanish; others simply withdraw their children, sending them to parochial schools that teach all students in English.

The other solution to the problem of ethnic entitlements, of course, would be simply to end them for everyone. There are many good reasons for doing this, even if immigration were to cease altogether. Race- and ethnic-based entitlements have been a bane of American social policy for the last quarter-century. They have divided Americans, increased group hostility, and perverted the whole notion of color-blind justice. Furthermore, they are the foundation on which the entire edifice of multiculturalism is built. Without the enticement of racial and ethnic preferences in education, employment, voting, and elsewhere, group identity, instead of intensifying in recent years, might have diminished.

Multicultural education has become the main instrument to help preserve group identity. But multicultural education is no more a byproduct of increased Latin and Asian immigration than are bilingual education and ballots, ethnic voting districts, and affirmative action. In fact, multicultural education first came into being largely to address the demands of blacks for proportional representation in the curriculum—though by now it has spread (some would say, metastasized) to the point where all students are encouraged to think of themselves primarily as members of groups rather than as Americans.

Thus, when California recently adopted a new textbook series for kindergarten through eighth grade, ethnic protestors turned out at schoolboard hearings in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland, and other cities, insisting upon changes not only in the treatment of blacks but also in the way the series dealt with Indians, Hispanics, Jews, Muslims, and even conservative Christians.

Critics of immigration like O'Sullivan and Brimelow believe that multiculturalism would, in O'Sullivan's words, "be easier to dismantle if immigration were reduced." But the California story suggests that, if anything, it is ethnic diversity itself that might actually hasten the demise of multiculturalism. Like a house of cards that has grown too unwieldy, multicultural education may collapse of its own weight if it is required to include the distinct stories of each of the hundreds of different groups now in the schools.

But the unraveling of multicultural education, salutary a prospect as it may be, is hardly a good reason for maintaining our current immigration policy. Clearly, that policy needs changing in ways that are consistent with our national interests and values. I would argue, indeed, that our immigration policy should *reinforce* our national identity—which is not necessarily the same thing as our racial or ethnic composition.

WHAT, then, should we do? Let me deal with legal immigration first.

• *Change the system to one that favors skills.* The basis of the current system is the principle of family reunification, adopted in 1965 with the expectation that this would maintain the ethnic balance of the U.S. population as it existed at the time. Of course things have not worked out that way. But questions of ethnic balance aside, there is nothing sacrosanct about family reunification as a guiding principle of immigration policy, and we should not be deterred from changing it out of fear that such a move might be interpreted as racist.

In any case, the problem with the current immigrant pool is not that there are too many Latinos and Asians *per se*, but that too many of the people we now admit are low-skilled. Mexicans come with only about seven years of schooling on average, and less than a quarter have obtained high-school diplomas. Such newcomers face a much more difficult period of adjustment and bring fewer benefits to the U.S. economy than would more highly skilled immigrants.

It is true that under current criteria, which include only 140,000 slots for skills-based admissions, immigrants are twice as likely to hold Ph.D.'s as are U.S.-born persons. But they are also more likely to be high-school drop-outs. We ought to admit more of the former and fewer of the latter, and regardless of their country of origin. As it turns out, immigrants from Africa and Asia have among the highest average levels of education. Nearly 90 percent of all African immigrants are high-school graduates—a figure 15-percent higher than that for Canadian immigrants. And Indians, Taiwanese, and Iranians have among the highest proportions of college or graduate degrees.

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• *Encourage immigrants to assimilate.* Immigration policy entails more than laws regulating who gets admitted and under what criteria. It also involves—or at least should involve—how we incorporate immigrants into our society. On that score, we are doing much more poorly now than we did in the past, in part because we have given up on the notion that we have an obligation to assimilate immigrants. Regardless of what other changes we make in immigration policy, we must reverse course on this issue. If immigration to the U.S. ceased tomorrow, we would still have twenty million foreign-born persons living here, plus their children. Assimilation is essential for them, as well as for the rest for us, if we are to stop the further fragmenting of our society.

First and foremost, this means encouraging immigrants and their children to learn English, which in practical terms means abolishing bilingual education in favor of English-immersion programs in the public schools. By now we have nearly thirty years of experience demonstrating that bilingual education helps children neither to learn English nor to do better in school. Latino immigrants in particular have been badly served by bilingual education—and by their putative leaders, usually U.S.-born, who are the main lobby behind this expensive, ineffective, and wasteful program.

But bilingual education is not the only culprit. With so many services available in their native language, immigrants have fewer incentives today to learn English than they did in the past. Private services—native-language newspapers, advertising, etc.—fall outside the scope of public policy. But *government* services ought to be provided only in English. A common language has been critical to our success in forging a sense of national identity. Our public policies should preserve and protect that heritage. If the courts continue to obstruct local and state efforts to make English the official language of government, we should pass a federal constitutional amendment to ensure it.

• *Limit welfare benefits.* Although immigrants as a whole are somewhat more likely than natives to receive welfare, the opposite is true of those of working age (15-64). In addition, immigrants have higher labor-force-participation rates than natives, with Hispanic men having among the highest—83.4 percent compared with 75 percent for non-Hispanic whites. If we modify our admission criteria to favor more highly skilled immigrants, welfare among working-age immigrants should drop below even the current rate of about 3 percent, alleviating much of the concern about immigrants and welfare.

The problem is high dependency rates among refugees and elderly immigrants. Among the former, this is a direct result of U.S. policy, which guarantees cash and medical assistance to all persons admitted under the refugee-resettlement program. Having been admitted, they are then attracted to states with relatively high benefits, and this tends to encourage long-term dependency. Thus, in California, some two-thirds of Laotian and Cambodian refugees and more than one-third of Vietnamese refugees remain on welfare after more than five years in the U.S.

While dealing comprehensively with this situation entails the much larger issue of welfare reform, it is possible to make a dent in it by redesigning programs to limit the number of months refugees can receive assistance. One of the most promising possibilities would be to turn over responsibility for such assistance to private agencies, such as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and the Council of Jewish Federations, which have proved more successful at moving refugees off welfare. In Chicago, 74 percent of refugees in an experimental private resettlement project found work within six months of arrival, and only 2 percent remained on welfare after thirteen months, compared with more than 40 percent in the state-administered program.

The problem of elderly immigrants is more complicated. In 1990, 55 percent of elderly Chinese immigrants in California who had arrived between 1980 and 1987 were on welfare, as were 21 percent of elderly Mexican immigrants. Because they have worked too few years or at insufficient wages to qualify for adequate Social Security benefits, most such recipients obtain Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

But many of these immigrants are the parents of resident aliens who brought them here under family-reunification provisions. Anyone who sponsors an immigrant must guarantee that he will not become a public burden, and is required to accept full financial responsibility for up to five years. Simply enforcing these provisions would greatly alleviate the problem of welfare dependency among elderly immigrants. (Among recipients in California that should not pose a problem, since 50 percent of their children's households in 1990 had incomes over $50,000, and 11 percent over $100,000.) We might also consider lengthening the number of years sponsors are required to provide support to family members; Canada currently requires a ten-year commitment.

All these reforms are addressed to the policies governing legal immigration. What about illegal immigration?

Like welfare dependency among immigrants, illegal immigration is not so big a problem as many people imagine (in one recent poll, two-thirds said they thought most immigrants are illegal aliens). Estimates of overall numbers vary widely, with some commentators hysterically claiming more than ten million illegal aliens. But the more reliable Census Bureau estimates about four million, with (as noted earlier) another 300,000 or so added each year.

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In theory, no amount of illegal immigration is acceptable, since the phenomenon represents our failure to maintain secure borders, a prerequisite of national sovereignty. In practice, however, it is unlikely that we will ever completely eradicate illegal immigration: our borders are too long and porous and our society too free and prosperous. But there are steps we can take that would significantly reduce the current flow.

• *Stop illegal aliens at the border.* There is no mainstream support for mass round-ups and deportations of the type used in the 1930's and 50's to roust illegal aliens; nor could such a program withstand legal challenge. Therefore, the only way to reduce the flow is to contain it at the border. The frontier between Mexico and the U.S. is 2,000 miles long, but only about 250 miles of it are traversable. Most illegal aliens enter in a handful of places near metropolitan areas—about 65 percent around San Diego and El Paso.

We know that it is possible to reduce the flow significantly with more Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) personnel and better equipment and technology. A recent two-month, $25-million experiment in beefed-up border control near San Diego halved the number of illegal crossings; similar experiments in El Paso produced comparable results. While the most determined may seek alternative routes of entry, for the large majority rough terrain will limit the opportunity.

• *Deport alien criminals.* Apprehending and deporting illegal aliens who have successfully gotten past the border requires more resources and more draconian enforcement measures than most Americans would be willing to endorse; but there is overwhelming support for deporting those arrested for criminal acts in the U.S. In order to do this, however, local law-enforcement officials must be able to ascertain the status of persons in their custody, which they cannot now do easily. A pilot program in Phoenix, which allows police officers 24-hour access to INS records, might prove an effective model for enhancing local police efforts and making more deportations feasible.

• *Outlaw sanctuaries.* Several cities, including San Francisco, Sacramento, and Chicago, have enacted ordinances banning city employees from contacting the INS if they know someone is in the country illegally. These ordinances are an outrage and show utter disregard for the rule of law. Any city that chooses to obstruct immigration enforcement should lose all federal funds.

• *Deny welfare benefits to illegal aliens.* This is what California voters thought they were enacting with Proposition 187. In fact, in most states illegal aliens are already prohibited from receiving welfare and any but emergency medical treatment, but the authorities lack adequate means to verify the legal status of recipients. Consequently, a pilot program instituted in the early 1980's, the Alien Status Verification Index, should be expanded and upgraded with access to on-line INS data bases so that the status of welfare recipients can be checked.

A potentially more intractable problem is that U.S.-born children of illegal aliens are eligible, as citizens, for AFDC and other welfare benefits. Indeed, one out of four new AFDC recipients in California is a child of illegal-alien parents. The only way to prevent them from receiving benefits is to deny them citizenship in the first place, which would probably require a constitutional amendment. I would not suggest that we travel this route, at least not until we have exhausted all other means of keeping illegal aliens out. But neither should we consider the mere discussion of the issue taboo, as it is in most public-policy circles today. Especially now, when U.S. citizenship entails many more rights and benefits than responsibilities, it should not be beyond the pale to reconsider what entitles a person to obtain it.

• *Repeal employer sanctions.* While we are looking at ways to prevent illegal immigration, we ought to acknowledge that the linchpin of our current policy—punishing the employers of illegal aliens—has been a miserable failure. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which established such sanctions, did virtually nothing to reduce the flow into the country. If anything, it probably contributed to the problem of welfare dependency among the four million illegal aliens already here, by making it more difficult for them to support themselves.

In typical fashion, those who falsely promised that employer sanctions would fix the illegal-alien problem now think they can tinker with the existing provisions to make it work. Senator Alan Simpson proposes a national identity card; the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform thinks a national computerized work registry will do the trick.

But the purpose of both would be to enable employers to become better policemen for the immigration system, when they should never have been put in that position in the first place. Nor should the rest of us have to put up with more regulations and infringements on our privacy. It is simply wrong to burden the 98.5 percent of persons who are legally in the country with cumbersome and probably ineffective new requirements in order to try to punish the 1.5 percent of persons who have no right to be here.

THESE recommendations probably will not satisfy the most ardent foes of immigration, like the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the most influential restrictionist organization now operating. But many restrictionists are confused or just plain wrong about the nature of the immigration problem.

FAIR, for example, focuses almost exclusively on two issues: the size of current immigration,

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and its economic consequences. But neither of these is the heart of the matter.

FAIR's roots are in the population-control and environmentalist movements: this explains its preoccupation with numbers. Its founder, John Tanton, is a past president of Zero Population Growth and chairman of the National Sierra Club Population Committee. FAIR's two most prominent demographer-gurus are Garrett Hardin and Leon Bouvier, both of whom have been actively involved with population-control groups. Their primary concern is that immigrants—no matter where they are from or what their social and economic characteristics—add to the size of the population. (Bouvier has actually said that he believes the ideal U.S. population would be 150 million persons, though he has not clearly spelled out what he would do with the other 100 million of us who are already here.)

It is true that immigrants account for about half of current population growth in the U.S. Nonetheless, U.S. population growth as a whole is relatively modest, at 1 percent per year. Even with immigrants, including the more fecund Latins, we are in no danger of a Malthusian population explosion.

FAIR's other chief concern, the economic impact of immigration, probably has more resonance in the general debate; but here, too, confusion reigns. For years economists have discussed the consequences of immigration—legal and illegal—without coming to a definitive consensus. On one side are those like Julian Simon of the University of Maryland, who argue that immigration is a big plus for the economy, actually improving the standard of living of the native-born. At the other end of the spectrum are those like Donald Huddle of Rice University, the author of an influential 1993 study for the Carrying Capacity Network, a population-control group in Washington. Huddle estimates that immigrants (legal and illegal) cost more than $42.5 billion a year in net public assistance and displace more than two million American workers, incurring $12 billion a year in additional public-assistance costs for those displaced.

Huddle's figures have been widely disputed, including most recently in a General Accounting Office study. Even George Borjas of the University of California, San Diego, easily the most influential academic critic of current policy, estimates that immigration brings economic benefits to the U.S. in the range of $6 to $20 billion annually—small, but still a net positive gain. More importantly, Borjas acknowledges that these benefits could be increased significantly if we changed our policy to attract more skilled immigrants.

NO ECONOMIC model, however, can adequately capture the more subtle benefits that Americans have clearly derived from immigration, and not just from the flows that brought many of our grandparents and great-grandparents here. As Francis Fukuyama* and others have argued, most immigrants still seem to personify the very traits we think of as typically American: optimism, ambition, perseverance—the qualities that have made this country great. The ranks of successful immigrant entrepreneurs are legion; in Silicon Valley alone, recent immigrants have built many of the major technology companies, including Sun Microsystems, AST, and Borland International.

Immigrants have also transformed urban America over the last decade, from Korean grocers in New York to Salvadoran busboys and janitors in Washington, Mexican babysitters and construction workers in Los Angeles, Cambodian doughnut-shop owners in Long Beach, Haitian cooks in Miami, Russian taxi drivers in Philadelphia, and Filipino nurses and Indian doctors in public hospitals practically everywhere. As they always have done, immigrants still take the difficult, often dirty, low-paying, thankless jobs that other Americans shun. When they open their own businesses, these are frequently located in blighted, crime-ridden neighborhoods long since abandoned by American enterprise. And their children often outperform those who have been here for generations. This year, as in the last several, more than one-third of the finalists in the Westinghouse high-school science competition bore names like Chen, Yu, Dasgupta, Khazanov, Bunyavanich, and Hattangadi.

The contrast between the immigrant poor and the American underclass is especially striking. As the sociologist William Julius Wilson and others have observed, Mexican immigrants in Chicago, despite their relative poverty and much lower levels of education, show few of the dysfunctional characteristics of unemployment, crime, welfare dependency, and drug use common among the city's black and Puerto Rican underclass. In cities like Los Angeles and Washington, where American blacks and Latino immigrants inhabit the same poor neighborhoods, the despair of the former seems all the more intense by contrast to the striving of the latter—as if one group had given up on America even as the other was proving the continued existence of opportunity.

For all our anxiety about immigrants, then, in the end it is Americans of all classes who are caught in the middle of a national identity crisis. It is still possible to turn immigrants into what St. John de Crèvecoeur called "a new race of men," provided the rest of us still want to do this. But if we, the affluent no less than the poor among us, cease to believe that being an American has any worth or meaning, we should not blame immigrants, most of whom entertain no such doubts.

* "Immigrants and Family Values," COMMENTARY, May 1993.

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What To Do About the CIA

Richard Pipes

For the second time since it came into being in 1947, the Central Intelligence Agency is fighting for its life. Twenty years ago, following revelations by the Church (Senate) and Pike (House) committees of the Agency's involvement in illegal activities on U.S. territory, such as spying on American citizens opposed to the Vietnam war, there was a clamor for its abolition. The KGB added fuel to this fire by supporting and financing disinformation purporting to show that the CIA, a painful thorn in its side, was a threat to American democracy. The Agency managed to weather the assault, only to face today an even more daunting challenge to its existence.

The current movement is inspired not by alleged illegal activities, which have not recurred since the mid-1970's, but by the charge that the CIA has consistently provided the government with faulty assessments and tolerated inexcusable security breaches in its ranks. The main argument against it, however, is that with the collapse of the USSR the Agency has become redundant.

The CIA was indeed founded at the onset of the cold war for the specific purpose of coping with the Communist threat to the United States and forestalling another Pearl Harbor which, especially after the Soviet Union had exploded an atomic device in August 1949, would present the prospect of an incomparably more damaging surprise attack. President Truman created a *central* intelligence organization to collect and analyze information obtained by the government's separate intelligence services. He did so despite protests that he was setting up an "American Gestapo," because inquiries into the Pearl Harbor disaster revealed that in 1941 the U.S. had had at its disposal enough indications of a pending Japanese strike to anticipate and prevent it, but had taken no action because it lacked an organization capable of collating the diffuse bits and pieces of intelligence information.

RICHARD PIPES, Baird Professor of History at Harvard, served in 1981-82 at the National Security Council as Director, East European and Soviet Affairs. In 1976 he chaired Team B, a panel of outside experts who successfully challenged the CIA's interpretation of the Soviet military build-up. His books include *Russia Under the Old Regime, The Russian Revolution,* and *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime.*

Before proceeding with an assessment of the CIA, a few facts need to be established. The CIA is neither the only nor the largest intelligence branch of the U.S. government. The United States has approximately a dozen intelligence organizations, some attached to the civilian branches (from the Departments of Defense and State to that of Agriculture), others to the military services. By far the largest recipient of intelligence appropriations is the Department of Defense which, in addition to maintaining its own intelligence bureau (the Defense Intelligence Agency, or DIA), manages both satellite surveillance and communications intercepts. Recent leaks from Congress indicate that of the $28 billion budgeted annually for intelligence, the CIA receives only $3 billion. Thus, even if the CIA were abolished, a huge and costly intelligence apparatus would remain: lost would be an organ capable of bringing together the evidence obtained by the different services. We would find ourselves in the same position as before Pearl Harbor.

The second fact to bear in mind is that the CIA is only in a limited sense a "spying" organization, in that "spying" in the precise sense of the word (involving deliberate disguise and deception) constitutes only a small part of the CIA's activities, whether measured in terms of personnel or of budgets. The Agency has two principal divisions: the Directorate of Operations, which carries out clandestine work, including espionage, and the Directorate of Intelligence, which collects and analyzes data that flow from diverse sources. According to knowledgeable persons, clandestine operations currently absorb less than 5 percent of the Agency's budget, and possibly as little as 1 percent. Much covert work consists of small and peaceful operations such as sponsoring publications and funding trade unions.

The principal business of the Agency is analysis and estimation: the CIA resembles far less the world inhabited by James Bond and the heroes of John le Carré's novels than a gigantic think-tank, staffed with people who have nothing to do with spying (even if they benefit from covertly obtained information) and who in their training and duties resemble academic researchers.

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Triumphs and Fiascos

THE opponents of the CIA stress its recurrent intelligence failures as an argument for its liquidation. And undeniably, the Agency has had more fiascos than the law of averages would suggest. It misjudged from the outset both the pace and the magnitude of the Soviet nuclear effort, its main responsibility: its 1966 projection of Soviet ICBM's for 1970, for instance, was half of what they turned out, in fact, to be.[1] It minimized or ignored Soviet defensive measures, such as dispersal, hardening, and redundancy of command-and-control systems, as well as shelter provisions for the leadership—measures which told a great deal about Soviet strategic intentions. Year after year, it depicted the Soviet economy as healthier than it actually was and Soviet defense expenditures as considerably lower than they actually were. On President Kennedy's accession in 1961, the CIA provided projections of Soviet economic growth, based on Moscow's statistics, from which it emerged that by the year 2000 the USSR would have a gross national product (GNP) three times that of the United States![2] At the same time, the Agency consistently underestimated the Soviet defense budget, placing it originally at 6 to 8 percent of GNP and then, in February 1976, inexplicably doubling that figure to 10 to 15 percent.[3] As has become known since, the true figure was close to double even the doubled figure.

The reasons for these misjudgments will be spelled out in due course. Here, suffice it to say that such absurd miscalculations had serious political consequences. For by depicting the Soviet Union as both stronger and less menacing than previously thought, they pushed the United States toward accommodation with it in the form of détente and an obsession with arms-control negotiations.

The Agency's record of predictions is hardly better than its estimates. In 1950, it failed first to anticipate North Korea's invasion of South Korea and then the intervention of China. In 1962, it denied that Russia intended to install missiles in Cuba up to the very moment when photographic imagery proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the missiles were being deployed. It anticipated neither the Warsaw Pact aggression against Czechoslovakia in 1968, nor the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, nor the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan later that same year, nor even Iraq's assault on Kuwait in 1990. It was surprised by the crushing of Solidarity in Poland in 1981. Such instances of failure can be multiplied.

Less often mentioned are the CIA's successes. It has done an excellent job of tracking Soviet weapons developments. In the 1950's, it correctly downplayed the prospect of a Soviet attack on the United States which had many Washington politicians and generals worried. It set in motion a variety of programs to counter Communist propaganda, one of which, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, contributed powerfully to keeping alive dissent inside the Communist bloc. In the 1980's, under President Reagan and his Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), William Casey, it helped, by various covert economic, military, and political operations, to undermine Soviet authority in Poland and Afghanistan.

Many of the Agency's intelligence failures can be attributed to identifiable and remediable flaws of methodology. But even the best-functioning intelligence service cannot be counted upon reliably to predict the actions of foreign powers: divining political intentions is far and away the most difficult aspect of intelligence work. This holds especially true of dictatorial regimes, with which U.S. intelligence is particularly concerned, because their decisions are in the hands of unstable and impulsive individuals subject to few if any external controls. It is hard to predict the behavior of unpredictable personalities.

TO PLACE the CIA's performance in proper perspective, it helps to look at the record of other intelligence organizations. In the 1930's, the vaunted British secret service, notwithstanding excellent contacts in Germany, persistently misjudged Hitler's military capabilities as well as his intentions, having convinced itself that the Nazi rearmament program was purely defensive. After Hitler had gone to war in September 1939, British intelligence believed that economic exigencies would make it increasingly difficult for Germany to continue fighting beyond the spring of 1941.[4] British intelligence, which at the time, like its U.S. counterpart, lacked a center to collate secret data, firmly rejected the possibility of a Nazi-Soviet rapprochement, a German invasion of Norway, or a Wehrmacht assault on France by way of the (allegedly) impassable Ardennes Forest.[5]

Japanese intelligence, for its part, managed to persuade its superiors that once the American Pacific fleet had been crippled, the Americans, being prudent businessmen, would sue for peace rather than fight an unprofitable war. The German secret service assured Hitler that as soon as the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact of 1939 became public, Britain would renege on its pledge

[1] John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate* (Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 183-96.

[2] Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile in Power* (Simon & Schuster, 1993), p. 54.

[3] John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 621-22.

[4] Christopher Andrew, *Her Majesty's Secret Service* (Viking Penguin, 1986), p. 428.

[5] "As that ancient retiree from the Research Department of the British Foreign Office reportedly said, after serving from 1903 to 1950: 'Year after year the worriers and fretters would come to me with awful predictions of the outbreak of war. I denied it each time. I was wrong only twice.'" Cited by Richard Betts in *World Politics*, October 1978.

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to defend Poland and abandon that country to its fate. Both misjudgments had catastrophic results for the countries concerned.

Intelligence failures, it thus transpires, are not a CIA monopoly; they are not even a monopoly of the intelligence community. Despite vast sums spent on armies of securities analysts who have the advantage of a great deal of reliable public information as well as access to managements, no brokerage firm seems to have found a way of gauging the direction of the financial markets. Indeed, the unmanaged Standard & Poor index fund has been beating three-quarters of the mutual funds run by experts. Even throwing darts at a list of securities has at times produced results as good as, if not better than, those of professional analysts. Nor have economists had notable success in forecasting the course of the nation's economy despite the abundance of indicators at their disposal.[6] What can one reasonably expect, therefore, of analysis which deals with concealed and often deliberately distorted data, and with decisions made in secret by inaccessible rulers, accountable only to themselves?[7]

It needs also to be borne in mind that the sins of the CIA with respect to the Communist bloc duplicated those of academic Sovietology. Proceeding from the same premises and employing the same methodology, the overwhelming majority of professors and think-tank specialists were just as guilty as the CIA of overestimating Soviet strength and stability and of interpreting Soviet actions in defensive terms.[8]

This much conceded, it is possible nevertheless to isolate certain recurrent blunders on the part of both intelligence producers and consumers, avoidance of which would go a long way toward improving the intelligence process. The two most common of these are "mirror-imaging" and political interference.

Mirror-Imaging

MIRROR-IMAGING is the tendency to interpret the actions of others in one's own terms. The analyst looks at the situation which his subject confronts and asks himself, "What would I do if I were in his shoes?" The propensity to think in this way derives from a mixture of deficient imagination and, where other nations are concerned, ethnocentricity. The approach assumes that in every situation requiring choices, one choice is the most "rational" and therefore the most likely to be made.

The trouble with this premise is that "rationality" applies only to the means, not to the ends.[9] The person engaged in mirror-imaging, however, assumes that all human actions tend toward the same end—namely, his own—and that, by placing himself in the position of an adversary, he can anticipate the adversary's behavior. It is, without a doubt, the most common error of intelligence-estimating, much more prevalent in political affairs than in military ones, since in warfare the end is always the same—victory—and thus the means can be more reliably calculated in terms of their "rationality."[10]

The more imaginative the analyst, the better versed in the cultures with which he deals, the less likely he will be to attribute to others his own values and objectives. Unfortunately, in this respect the typical U.S. analyst is at a particular disadvantage, being the product of a political culture that disapproves of the notion that other people are "different," since that notion has commonly been used to justify racial and ethnic discrimination. Deeply embedded in this country's ethos is the belief that fundamentally all peoples are the same—that is, like white, middle-class Americans—and if given a chance will behave like white, middle-class Americans. What is usually meant by this is that people act out of enlightened self-interest, unaffected by strong passions or convictions, and desire to improve their lot and to live in peace with the rest of humanity.

The following remarks by a scholar who has had close connections with the intelligence community may be overly censorious but they describe a genuine phenomenon:

> The typical [CIA] officer was brought up in a nice American suburb during the 1960's. . . . He has never done manual labor, and has never been personally close to anyone who has lived by it. He has never had to struggle for his next meal, and has never known anyone who has. He has no idea of life under arbitrary power. He has never served in the armed forces, much less has he known danger. He has traveled abroad as a tourist, but has never lived or transacted business abroad. His upbringing

[6] At the end of 1994, reporting on the steady growth of the U.S. economy during the preceding twelve months, the *New York Times* wondered: "Why were most forecasters, who as recently as this summer were predicting a much leaner expansion and higher unemployment, so far off the mark?" *New York Times*, December 13, 1994.

[7] The paradoxical aspect of British and American intelligence failures is that if treated as advice rather than predictions, they were often perfectly correct. Germany, indeed, did not have the capacity to wage a prolonged war. The Soviet Union should not have spent so much of its limited resources on the military, nor should it have installed missiles in Cuba or invaded Afghanistan. Similarly, North Korea would have spared itself a humiliating defeat by staying out of South Korea and Saddam Hussein by giving up his claims to Kuwait.

[8] Good examples of this kind of thinking, common to the academic and intelligence communities, are two treatises by Raymond Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation* (1985) and *The Great Transition* (1994), both published by the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

[9] The adjective "rational" derives from the Latin *ratio* which meant "reckoning" or "calculation" and was used in accounting. It defines the ways of attaining a desired result with the least effort and expense.

[10] Mirror-imaging is more common in Anglo-Saxon countries with their prevailing utilitarian ethos. The Japanese and German intelligence services suffered more from a poor understanding of the American and British psyches.

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did not acquaint him with passion of any kind. It taught him to distrust the notion that anyone can believe in anything. He does not attend church or synagogue, nor does he argue about religion. He is a pleasant fellow, neither aggressively patriotic nor aggressively anything, and is uncomfortable with anyone who is.[11]

Such a person does not understand and therefore is unable to take seriously ideological or religious fanaticism; he interprets behavior that does not serve his conception of enlightened self-interest as either affectation or the result of material want and social injustice.

IT IS this mindset that has caused the CIA to misread many Communist actions. In 1950, the Agency was convinced that the Chinese would not intervene in Korea because such action would be "irrational": hence it predicted that they would confine themselves to the defense of their power plants along the Yalu River. In the early 60's it could not see any conceivable interest on the part of the Soviet Union in placing nuclear missiles in Cuba since Moscow had to be aware that the United States would not tolerate such deployments: they were simply "too risky."[12] A National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) produced as late as September 1962 argued forcefully against this contingency.[13] The logic behind the gross misjudgment was spelled out in a rare moment of candor by Sherman Kent, a Yale history professor who served as the CIA's Director of National Estimates at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. Kent told his associates that

his estimate of what was reasonable for the Soviet Union to do was a lot better than Khrushchev's, and therefore he was correct in analyzing the situation as it should have been seen by the Soviet Union.[14]

Mirror-imaging also caused the CIA to construe the massing of Red Army troops in Central Asia in 1979 as designed to protect Soviet assets in Afghanistan. It rejected the likelihood of a political coup accompanied by a full-scale military invasion on the ground that Moscow would not want to jeopardize the SALT II agreement then before the U.S. Senate, let alone risk repeating America's debacle in Vietnam. CIA analysts apparently never contemplated the possibility that Russia might invade Afghanistan precisely to demonstrate that it could win the kind of war that America had lost.

Mirror-imaging also lay behind the stubborn insistence of the U.S. intelligence community in the 1970's that the Soviet Union would not seek nuclear superiority. Persuaded by U.S. scientists, who had largely formulated the American strategy of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), that nuclear war was unfeasible and that nuclear weapons had only one use—namely, to deter others—the CIA rationalized the observable Soviet build-up beyond parity in a variety of ways: that historic experience had made Russians a paranoid people; that Russia was confronting a Chinese threat; that it sought to make up with superior numbers for inferior quality. So wedded were CIA analysts to the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction they would not even consider an alternative view. Only after being confronted in 1976 with a different interpretation by a group of outsiders, the so-called Team B, whose members were better versed in Soviet political and military doctrine, did the CIA acknowledge the possibility that the Soviet high command was thinking in terms of a first-strike capability.[15]

Political Interference

IDEALLY, intelligence analysis should be strictly separated from politics: which is to say that it should arrive at assessments without paying attention to the uses to which they may be put and without taking sides in policy disputes. In practice, this ideal is rarely attained. For while the purpose of intelligence is to provide statesmen with objective information upon which to base their decisions, decision-makers are not detached observers but men of action with their own agendas. If reality clashes with their wishes, the wishes usually win out. They welcome intelligence that supports what they are inclined to do and they ignore all else, or, worse still, they exert pressure on the intelligence community to come up with more helpful estimates.

The most glaring example of the political misuse of intelligence was Stalin's refusal in 1941 to heed warnings of Hitler's impending invasion delivered to him both by his own and by Allied secret services. Stalin had entered into his pact with Hitler with open eyes. Like his patron and teacher, Lenin, he felt that German revanchism represented the best opportunity to get the capitalist powers fighting themselves to exhaustion, which would leave them prostrate and at the mercy of Moscow. To this end, he assured Hitler a safe Eastern front. Expecting a replay of World

[11] Angelo M. Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft: Intelligence for a New Century* (Free Press, 1992), p. 103.

[12] Harold P. Ford, *Estimative Intelligence*, revised edition (University Press of America, 1993), p. 103.

[13] Donald P. Steury, in *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates* (Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, 1994), p. ix.

[14] Ray Cline, one-time Deputy Director for Intelligence of the CIA, in Roy Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980's: Analysis and Estimates* (Transaction, 1980), p. 77.

[15] That this indeed was the Soviet intention has now been confirmed from Soviet sources: Ford, *Estimative Intelligence*, p. 120. Harold Ford worked for many years in the CIA and in 1977 served as consultant to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence which severely criticized Team B for all manner of alleged sins. Both the Team-A and Team-B NIE's for 1976 have now been declassified and can be obtained from the National Archives. On the Team-B experiment, see my article, "Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth," in the October 1986 issue of COMMENTARY.

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War I, he was stunned by the rapid collapse of France in 1940, and responded by appeasing Hitler, supplying him with food, rubber, tin, manganese, and everything else Germany required to pursue the war against England. The possibility of Hitler's turning around and attacking so faithful an ally struck him as preposterous and he dismissed reports to this effect as a British provocation. This, of course, represented a case of blatant mirror-imaging but also, and above all, of political interest overriding objective assessment. It nearly lost Russia the war, and caused millions of additional casualties.

In the United States, flagrant instances of ignoring or tampering with intelligence data occurred under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. Shaken by Khrushchev's bullying at the Vienna summit conference of 1961, Kennedy chose to demonstrate his toughness by invading Cuba and intervening in Vietnam. In both instances he brushed aside warnings of the CIA. Johnson, too, ignored CIA admonitions about the risks of a massive involvement in Vietnam because he had made up his mind to pursue the war there until victory.

The worst instances of politicization of the CIA occurred under President Nixon, who treated the Agency as a tool of White House policies. Irritated by its independent judgment, Nixon shifted much of the intelligence-estimating authority from the Agency to the office of his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger. In this manner, assessments could be reached which justified White House policies. In 1973 Kissinger, now Secretary of State, abolished the prestigious Office of National Estimates, replacing it with an amorphous body of individual National Intelligence Officers, who, acting as individuals rather than as a group, were easier to manipulate. To attain an arms-limitation agreement with Moscow, Nixon and Kissinger disregarded the Agency's skepticism about U.S. ability to verify treaty compliance. According to one Agency veteran, the Nixon White House "brought strong pressure to bear on DCI Richard Helms to change the judgments of the National Intelligence Estimates."[16]

Nixon further politicized the CIA by firing Helms for his independence and refusal to involve the Agency in the Watergate cover-up.[17] Until then, the head of the intelligence agency, like that of the FBI, had been regarded as a civil servant rather than a political appointee. Historians of the CIA agree that these pressures greatly lowered both the quality of its intelligence estimates and its morale.

The practice of pressuring the Agency to come up with politically acceptable estimates continued under President Carter, whose DCI, Admiral Stansfield Turner, is said to have interfered with the estimating process and to have provided his own private estimates to suit the President.[18]

A recent instance of politicizing the intelligence process occurred in connection with the Gulf war. Having decided in late 1989 that he could turn Saddam Hussein around and moderate him, President Bush did not request a CIA assessment of the prospects and risks of such a policy before going ahead with its implementation. According to the CIA's Deputy Director of Intelligence, the NIE on Iraq was produced after the decision to appease Saddam Hussein had been taken and duly ratified it.[19] In order to support that policy, the NIE wrongly concluded that Iraq was too exhausted by its war with Iran to cause trouble before 1992.[20] This judgment was reached despite the fact that satellite imagery clearly indicated a massive build-up of Iraqi forces.

Finally, it is said that an NIE issued in 1990 or 1991 which predicted very accurately the violent break-up of Yugoslavia was ignored by policymakers who did not even want to contemplate such a possibility.[21]

Thus, apart from the difficulties inherent in the process of assessing intelligence data and making forecasts on their basis, the CIA, like its counterparts in other countries, suffers from the added liability of having its estimates rejected or ignored when they do not fit the interests of politicians, their ultimate consumers.

What Can Be Done?

THERE is little doubt that, before long, decisions will be taken that will significantly transform the Central Intelligence Agency. A presidential committee, headed by ex-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, has been mandated to come up with recommendations on the subject by March 1, 1996.

Many projects of intelligence reform have been floated in the past, but for the most part they have involved organizational restructuring, which is every bureaucratic establishment's favored way of responding to outside criticism. Current reform proposals, including those emanating from the recently retired DCI, Robert Gates, also focus on splitting up and distributing the constituent parts of the CIA without touching on the profounder causes of its shortcomings. Whatever the merits of organizational changes, they are best left to insiders. Without denying their utility, it may be doubted that the performance of the CIA (or its replacement) will greatly improve unless

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[16] Ford, *Estimative Intelligence*, p. 88.

[17] Ranelagh, *The Agency*, pp. 545-46.

[18] Mark M. Lowenthal, *U.S. Intelligence: Evolution and Anatomy*, 2nd edition (Greenwood, 1992), p. 53.

[19] Douglas J. MacEachin, *The Tradecraft of Analysis: Challenge and Change in the CIA* (Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, 1994), p. 26.

[20] Joseph Nye, *Estimating the Future?* (Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, 1994), p. 3.

[21] Charles Cogan in *Intelligence and National Security*, IX, No. 4 (October 1994), p. 634; Nye, *Predicting*, p. 15.

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attention is given to the intellectual and political environment in which it operates.

The following suggestions seek to address the CIA's more fundamental problems:

• One thing should not be changed: a *central* intelligence agency is indispensable. Experience has shown time and again, here and abroad, that the dispersal of intelligence responsibilities among government agencies without a common clearing-house prevents decision-makers from obtaining a reliable overview of a potential enemy's capabilities and intentions.

Senator Daniel P. Moynihan has proposed doing away with the CIA altogether and transferring its functions to the Department of State. This recommendation not only ignores the fact that the State Department is a minor player in the collection and analysis of intelligence, but that it has traditionally spurned an intelligence role, preferring to rely on data obtained through diplomatic channels and being unwilling to have its diplomats treated as spies.

Only an organization separate from the other branches of government, with their vested interests in procuring arms, concluding international treaties, or promoting trade, can act as an "honest broker" and provide the President with disinterested assessments. Its function, in this respect, parallels that of the National Security Council, which came into existence concurrently with the CIA.

• With an estimated staff of 20,000, the CIA is much too large and ought to be *severely reduced in size.* History suggests that intelligence services function best when they are small and are allowed to operate with a minimum of formality. Bureaucratization stifles originality and dilutes dissent, reducing opinions to averages that appear reasonable and yet—since reality is often not reasonable—may be widely off the mark: but bureaucratization inevitably accompanies expansion. The failure of Israeli intelligence in 1973 to interpret correctly the massing of Arab forces has been attributed to its bureaucratization following the Six-Day war of 1967. Conversely, the greatest triumphs of intelligence in this century—the breaking of the German codes by the British and of the Japanese codes by the Americans in World War II—were accomplished by small bands of eccentrics. When he organized the Office of Intelligence Estimates in 1950, Harvard's William Langer said he wanted twenty analysts, and certainly no more than 100. And, indeed, in the first twenty years, the staff of Intelligence Estimates never exceeded 100. Today, the Directorate of Intelligence, the hub of the analytic world, employs 2,500.[22]

• One way to reduce the CIA staff, apart from shifting some of its functions to other government departments, is generously to *reward* good work and ruthlessly *punish* poor performance. Contrary to the Agency's practice, there should be no tolerance of analysts who consistently produce flawed assessments or assessments that hedge to the point of being useless. Altogether, the self-protective, clubbish atmosphere that prevails in the Agency needs to be done away with.

Much of the current hostility to the CIA derives from its scandalous indulgence of an incompetent officer, Aldrich Ames, who for nearly nine years used his position in the most sensitive branch, counterintelligence, to sell the KGB secret documents and betray Russians working for the United States. The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has characterized this incident as the "most egregious" case of treason in American history, blaming it on the Agency's habit of being "excessively tolerant of serious personal and professional misconduct among its employees."[23] The charge is underscored by the fact that none of Ames's superiors has been dismissed.

• Analysts should be required to have *profound knowledge and understanding* of the societies with which they deal so as to avoid mirror-imaging. They must be able to identify with the cultures which are their responsibility and, in order to do so, learn to overcome the American aversion to the idea that nations differ in some fundamental ways.

In the 1930's, Sir Robert Vansittart, acting as a one-man intelligence service, almost alone provided the British government with accurate assessments of Nazi capabilities and intentions, including the likelihood of Germany's rapprochement with the Soviet Union. He succeeded because he knew Germany better than the professionals of the secret service. One month before Pearl Harbor, the American ambassador to Japan, Joseph G. Grew, who had spent nearly ten years in Tokyo, responded to judgments that the Japanese could not contemplate an attack on the United States by warning against

> any possible misconception of the capacity of Japan to rush headlong into a suicidal conflict with the United States. National sanity would dictate against such an event, but Japanese sanity cannot be measured by our own standards of logic.[24]

So, too, anyone familiar with Communist history and psychology would have known that Moscow could not accept the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction because it had the effect of stabilizing the global power balance in America's favor by eliminating competition in military forces, where the Soviet Union was strong, and

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[22] Discussant in MacEachin, *Tradecraft of Analysis*, p. 33.

[23] U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *An Assessment of the Aldrich H. Ames Espionage Case and Its Implications for U.S. Intelligence* (November 1, 1994), p. 85.

[24] Cited in Charles D. Ameringer, *U.S. Foreign Intelligence* (Free Press, 1990), p. 132.

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shifting it to the political and economic arenas, where it was weak.

Such understanding can be taught, but only up to a point. Beyond that point it calls for wisdom that is an inborn quality: discernment and judgment cannot be institutionalized, but they can be rewarded.

• There is no substitute for *human intelligence* (HUMINT in CIA jargon). Since Admiral Turner's unfortunate tenure as DCI in the Carter administration, reliance on human sources has been severely curtailed in favor of technical means, notably satellite imagery. The preference is, in some measure, understandable: in dealing with informants one can never be certain whether they are not double agents feeding disinformation, or well-intentioned but unreliable sources providing biased information out of grudge feelings against their native country. Cameras, by contrast, neither lie nor distort.

The trouble, however, is that technical means, while generally dependable in the matter of capabilities, cannot penetrate minds and hence are blind and deaf to intentions. Overreliance on technology can cause intelligence to miss what is most important. This, indeed, is what happened in the case of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: "Antennas sensitive to millionths of amps, and orbiting cameras that could detect mice on the earth's surface, did not see hundreds of millions of people ready to overthrow the Communist world."[25] Nothing obtained by technical means has provided U.S. and British intelligence with the kind of information supplied by Oleg Penkovsky, Ryszard Kuklinski, or Oleg Gordievsky.

In the future, when the United States will confront not one hostile power with a massive nuclear arsenal, but many potential enemies with nuclear weapons and fanatical terrorists at their disposal, human intelligence will be more essential than ever.

• The intelligence community would do well to make greater use of *open sources*. Secret services are habitually reluctant to do so because information obtained by clandestine means enables them to shrug off criticism on the ground that the critics are not privy to classified information. But it is rare for classified data to outweigh what is in the public domain. How much better would British intelligence have understood Hitler's ambitions had it read (and taken seriously) *Mein Kampf*, and how much would U.S. analysts have profited had they studied (and taken seriously) Soviet publications on nuclear strategy or the writings of Soviet émigrés on the Soviet economy.

Quality journalism is not only an essential adjunct to material obtained by intelligence but often a superior product because the information it contains has been collected and sifted by experienced observers on the scene. It has been my experience, while serving on the National Security Council, that although the Intelligence Daily which landed on my desk every morning occasionally provided unique insights, especially on military matters, it added little to what I learned from the press. Like many others in a similar situation, if compelled to choose between relying exclusively on one or the other—intelligence reports or the open press—I would unhesitatingly opt for the latter. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, arguably the world's leading dailies, have over the years reported more reliably on political, economic, and cultural developments in the Communist bloc than the CIA. That this is not merely a casual impression has been confirmed by comparisons made by the National Security Council's staff during the Nixon administration.[26]

• To prevent more counterintelligence debacles, the *FBI* should be induced to cooperate better with the CIA. From the outset, the FBI has treated the CIA as an unwelcome rival and frequently refused to share information with it. This rivalry is believed to have been responsible for Ames's ability to escape detection for so long. The importance of counterintelligence ought to be upgraded as well: it has been traditionally treated with disdain by the community.

• To the extent that is humanly possible, the White House should resist the temptation to use the CIA as an *instrument of policy*. In the words of a veteran intelligence professional who had occasion to witness White House pressures to bend assessments, "the NIE's ought to be responsive to the evidence, not the policy-maker."[27] This objective might be helped by the creation of a mechanism that would facilitate regular communications between intelligence personnel and policy-makers before crises occur.

• Limits ought to be set to the *legislative branches' powers of oversight* of intelligence agencies. Congress acquired these powers in the 1970's, and though in some measure inevitable—in a democracy based on the separation of powers, the legislative branch is not likely to concede exclusive control over foreign intelligence to the executive—they have exceeded reasonable limits.

The CIA is the only body of its kind in the world that is required to account regularly to the legislature—no fewer than eight congressional committees!—and even to obtain from one of them (the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence) prior approval of clandestine operations. The British secret service, by contrast, is accountable to a single individual, the Minister of Defense.

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[25] Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, p. 125.

[26] Andrew Marshall in Roy Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for the 1990's: Collection, Analysis, Counterintelligence, and Covert Action* (Lexington Books, 1989), p. 120.

[27] Ray S. Cline, *The CIA Under Reagan, Bush, and Casey* (Acropolis Books, 1981), p. 162.

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Given large congressional staffs, even with the greatest precautions the American practice ensures the leakage of classified information, paralyzing covert action. Means should be found to have the CIA report to one congressional committee or, better yet, to one or two of its representatives, and for these overseers to confine themselves to a general audit, without requiring too much detail, as was the case in the first quarter-century of the Agency's existence. With human lives at risk, covert operations surely should be concealed not only from hostile powers but from congressional staffs.

• Experience indicates that the *Director of Central Intelligence* and other senior intelligence officials can have the greatest impact on policy if they are personally and socially close to the President and other decision-makers. The importance of such a relationship derives from the fact that it enables the intelligence establishment to get a better hearing and better withstand political pressures. This is what happened in the case of DCI Allen Dulles's relationship with Eisenhower and his own brother, the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, as well as in the case of William Casey's relationship with Ronald Reagan. An alternative is to treat the DCI not as a political appointee due to be replaced by each incoming administration—as has been done since Nixon fired Helms—but as a civil-service professional, as is the case with the head of the FBI.

• Since its unwelcome but highly beneficial brush with Team B, the Agency has regularly resorted to *outside experts* to evaluate its product. This practice should be maintained and extended.

• The CIA has recently been pressured into accepting the idea of devoting the bulk of its attention to such global issues as pollution, health, natural resources, and endangered species. In 1991, President Bush signed a directive to this effect and the Agency quickly fell into line, creating a National Intelligence Officer for Global and Multilateral Issues. According to Robert Gates, the CIA was planning in 1992 to devote 40 percent of its resources to international economics and only 34 percent to Russia and the other successor states to the Soviet Union.[28] One can only view such a shift of emphasis as a desperate attempt to find a make-believe role for the CIA in the post-Soviet world. *But intelligence has only one function: to uncover foreign threats to national security.* International terrorism and nuclear traffic clearly come within its purview. Global economic or environmental problems just as clearly do not: along with other ills afflicting humanity and the earth, they are best left to international organizations.

• Although it is at present a fairly peaceful country, *Russia is likely to remain the principal potential threat to the United States* and should, therefore, remain the principal focus of our intelligence. Member states of the so-called Commonwealth of Independent States, a fictitious political entity if there ever was one, have been unable so far to devise political stability for themselves. Russia in particular lacks a political consensus: its democratic institutions function wretchedly, in an atmosphere of unreality. The mood of its people swings between extremes, one day sinking into abject self-deprecation, ready to welcome a foreign takeover, and the next insisting on being recognized as a global power of the first rank. The Yeltsin government, pressed by reactionary nationalists, is voicing ever-more-menacing threats to its neighbors. The KGB, though renamed and reorganized, remains very much in place. The armed forces, for all their difficulties, are also intact and commanded by generals who have not reconciled themselves to the loss of empire. The United States has mindlessly helped give them what they wanted—that is, a nuclear monopoly—by bullying Belorussia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan into surrendering their nuclear arsenals. In this manner, the U.S. has provided Moscow with the means some time in the future to force the separated republics back into the fold. Russia feels isolated, shunned by the world's major military and economic blocs, and tempted to find security in a reconstructed bloc of its own.

All these facts suggest that Russia will for the foreseeable future be a major security problem for the rest of the world. In consideration of these realities, we have retained NATO and refused Russia membership in it. It behooves us also to keep in place a strong intelligence apparatus responsible for giving that country its unremitting attention.

In a world of contending powers, an integrated intelligence service is indispensable. A CIA reduced in size and properly staffed, willing to rely more than heretofore on open sources and human informants, and allowed to operate free of political interference, should be in a position to render decision-makers invaluable advice. But intelligence services are no substitute for the statesman's personal judgment: they have not in the past and are unlikely in the future to provide him with the kind of certainty that he desires. In the end, the insight on which prudent decisions are based is the amalgam of diverse sources of information and experience, distilled by a process cloaked in mystery.

[28] Lowenthal, *U.S. Intelligence*, pp. 96 and 163.

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Land for Cash?

Dore Gold

TWENTY years ago, during his first term in office, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin struck what was probably the greatest bargain for Israel in the history of the Arab-Israeli peace process. During the summer of 1975—with Gerald Ford in the White House and Henry Kissinger as his Secretary of State—the U.S. and Israel had been wrestling with the question of whether the Rabin government would cede the strategic keys of the Sinai Peninsula, the Giddi and Mitla passes, in exchange for something less than nonbelligerency from the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat. (No one thought at the time that in little more than two years Sadat would be visiting Jerusalem and offering full peace.)

It was during these negotiations for what became the Second Sinai Disengagement Agreement (or Sinai II) that the basic Israeli-American paradigm for peacemaking was set. The U.S. understood the asymmetry of the proposed exchange. Israel was giving up tangible territorial assets that could not be recovered except in an act of war; its Arab interlocutor was making a political commitment that could be easily reversed or diluted. Hence, the U.S. would interject itself as a critical factor in Israeli calculations of the risks involved in territorial withdrawal, and would offer the tangibles which were missing in the direct exchange between Israel and the Arab side.

If Israel went through with the arrangement, the U.S. would, it promised, significantly upgrade the Israeli Air Force. If previously Israel flew A-4M Skyhawks and F-4 Phantoms based on the technology of the 1960's, from now on it would be receiving P-15's and F-16's that would assure its superiority well into the 1980's. Other advanced weapons were committed as well. Ultimately Israel took the planes and gave up the passes.

The Rabin government did not thereby just obtain a technological leap for the Israeli Air Force; the new package was underpinned by a massive increase in American aid. In the years just prior to the Yom Kippur War in 1973, U.S. military and economic assistance (loans and grants) to Israel averaged about $800 million per year. Aid surged in 1974 to an unprecedented $4.5 billion as a result of war costs. It then began to revert to nearly prewar levels in 1975, coming down to just over a billion dollars. But thanks to Sinai II, U.S. aid to Israel increased by more than 200 percent, to $3.4 billion. From then on, aid never dropped below the $2-billion level. Clearly a new diplomatic pattern had been set based not only on "land for peace" but also on "land for cash."

Other innovations were introduced to grease the gears of diplomacy. In exchange for those Sinai passes, Israel obtained a host of diplomatic assurances that were intended to protect its interests in future negotiations with the Palestinians and with Syria. More importantly, Sinai II was the first time Washington agreed to put in American monitors of an Arab-Israeli disengagement line. The small Sinai field mission that was dispatched to the passes consisted of civilian technicians rather than uniformed military personnel. Nonetheless it added another instrument to the U.S.-Israeli peace paradigm of the 1970's: the deployment of Americans as an assurance to Israel as it withdrew from disputed territory.

Undergirding the commitment of funding and peacekeepers was yet another essential aspect of this peace model: the strong U.S. interest in seeing UN Security Council Resolution 242 (the land-for-peace formula) fully implemented.

Here the Soviet factor played a central role. Prior to 1973, the U.S. periodically coordinated its positions on the Middle East with the Soviet Union in anticipation of a superpower settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This led Washington to adopt harsh positions on territorial withdrawal, like the Rogers Plan, that were not far from those pushed for by Moscow. After 1973, the U.S. was driven in its Arab-Israeli diplomacy by the dangers of superpower escalation from regional conflicts. Either way, the cold war hovered over the substance and urgency of American diplomacy in the Middle East.

ALL this would belong to a study of diplomatic history, except that subsequent administrations sought to imitate, and in some cases intensify, the model of Sinai II. Thus, for example, total American aid to Israel shot up again in the wake of the 1978 Camp David ac-

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cords. So, too, after the signing of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles in 1993, President Bill Clinton made available to Israel an export version of the F-15E, the F-15I. Fifty used F-16A aircraft were also sold to Israel at a discount price.

The hard question that both countries face at present, however, is whether this approach can still work. Can a diplomatic model fashioned in the 1970's be applied in the international and domestic environment of the 1990's? The question is particularly troublesome because the focus of American policy in the year ahead will be a task far more daunting than it faced in Sinai—to offset the risks that Israel is preparing to undertake by a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. This involves three separate issues: the sort of aid-and-technology package Israel might require; what kind of peacekeeping role for the U.S. is likely to be sought; and whether the U.S. has a real interest in vigorously pushing for a full Israeli withdrawal.

Despite the growing use of ballistic missiles, wars in the Middle East are still decided by the movement of land armies. Since 1967, the Golan Heights have provided Israel with a powerful topographical advantage over Syria, both in the area of early-warning and in the event of actual armored warfare against Syria's quantitatively superior standing ground forces. And since the Gulf war, President Hafez al-Assad of Syria has been putting as much stress on the modernization of his armored divisions as he has on the procurement of North Korean missile systems.

When Israel took the Golan at the end of the Six-Day War of 1967, it was barely outnumbered because it had already mobilized its reserves and won on other fronts. But today, without any Israeli reserve mobilization, estimates of Syria's numerical superiority in active divisions along the Golan front vary from 3.5 to 1 to as much as 12 to 1. (Indeed, looking at armor alone in October 1973, 177 Israeli tanks stood against 1,400 Syrian tanks in the opening round of the Yom Kippur War.) Given the extreme difficulty of reaching security arrangements that adequately address these asymmetries, enhanced American aid to Israel is likely to be pivotal for clinching a Syrian-Israeli deal involving a full withdrawal from the Golan.

The notion that security arrangements could be designed to make such a withdrawal safe for Israel was first broached by some Israeli reserve generals during the 1980's. They argued that the precedent of Sinai could be followed in the Golan—Israel could safely give up sovereignty by putting in place limited-forces zones and demilitarization areas that neutralized any offensive threats to its borders.

In Sinai, however, security arrangements were implemented in a territory reaching some 120 miles in width. Because the Golan is maximally only eighteen miles wide, the security arrangements proposed by these Israeli reserve generals—and now advanced by the present Rabin government—are very different from those in Sinai. First, since demilitarization of eighteen miles is virtually worthless in modern mechanized war, any limited-forces zones will have to extend beyond the Golan itself and deep into southern Syria. Second, cutbacks in Syria's standing armored divisions will have to be made. And third, Israel will have to continue manning its early-warning stations even if they sit on territory that will eventually come under Syrian sovereignty.

There is no precedent in the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty for such intrusive Israeli security demands. Israel did not retain its great Sinai early-warning station at Umm Khashiba; it never created armor-exclusion zones west of the Suez Canal; it demilitarized only territory that it returned, not any areas that were close to the heart of the Egyptian state in the Nile Valley. By sharp contrast, the security arrangements Israel wants east of the Golan would bump right into the outskirts of the Syrian capital, Damascus.

RABIN is thus likely to obtain only a very small part of these demands in negotiations with Syria. If he fails to cut back the offensive strength of the Syrians, he will have to balance their power with increased assistance from the U.S. And if Assad refuses to permit Israeli early-warning teams to stay on the Golan, then Israel will probably have to seek some advanced technological systems that facilitate reconnaissance of Syria from the air.

True, Israeli defense experts have warned against such air-based warning, partly because of the harsh weather conditions in the Golan. Nonetheless, the Israeli press has reported interest on the part of the Israeli military in the Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS)—a plane that can pick up the movement of hostile targets on the ground, at great ranges.

If Israel wanted to go this route, it would need more than one of these expensive planes. To give 24-hour-a-day coverage of Syria, a number of backup planes for rotation would be required at all times; these backup planes would also be critical because of the vulnerability of such reconnaissance aircraft in Israel's narrow airspace to long-range surface-to-air missiles in the early stages of a war. No country would want to be dependent on one eye that could be easily blinded.

Even if the Israeli military had the best surveillance of Syria, however, it would still require a strong defensive capability on the ground in the event that intelligence material was misinterpreted and a warning failure ensued. Despite detailed American satellite coverage of the movement of Iraqi forces during the second half of July 1990, the U.S. failed to prepare for a full Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, due to the mistaken assumption that all Saddam Hussein was after was the Rumeilla oil field. In 1973, Israel had no

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shortage of data about what was happening on the Arab side; it did have a mistaken understanding of the significance of the preparations that were observed.

What would a high-tech defense line for Israel without the Golan Heights look like? Israel might pick some of the more successful state-of-the art technologies from the Gulf war, such as long-range artillery with submunitions or attack helicopters carrying stand-off missiles. But like the latest surveillance aircraft, these are extremely costly weapons systems. How much would be enough? According to the Gulf War Air Power Survey, the U.S. deployed a total of 274 of its best AH-64 Apache tank-killing helicopters against a total of 3,475 Iraqi tanks in the Kuwait theater of operations. The latest Jaffee Center Military Balance states that Israel has 42 such helicopters that would have to face about 4,900 Syrian tanks.

In other words, a lot more money is going to have to be spent if anyone has any intention of replicating the battlefield conditions of the Gulf war on the Golan Heights. The figure most commonly cited for the size of the compensation package that Israel will seek from the U.S. in exchange for the Golan Heights comes to no less than $5 billion. When taken together with the $3 billion Israel receives in security ($1.8 billion) and economic ($1.2 billion) assistance, the total aid level to Israel could reach $8 billion.

SOME believe that if this is the cost of a Syrian-Israeli peace, the money will be found. But most evidence points in the opposite direction. Senator Mitch McConnell, the new Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Operations subcommittee that deals with foreign aid, was actually asked by Akiva Eldar of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* about the $5-billion figure for the Golan Heights. McConnell, who is a strong supporter of Israel, replied: "I'm interested in the U.S. helping to secure peace in the Middle East, and I'm ready to support certain aid, but $5 billion is out of the question."

The Senate Republicans are not the only people in Washington suggesting that "land for cash" is in trouble. McConnell's Democratic predecessor on the Foreign Operations subcommittee, Senator Patrick Leahy, told National Public Radio on September 14, 1993, just one day after the Israel-PLO agreement was signed:

> I would only note that we're already spending $5 billion for the Camp David countries. Actually, it's considerably more than $5 billion if everything else was put in. *The American taxpayer cannot spend more money in the Middle East* [emphasis added].

More recently, Thomas McNamara, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, told *Defense News*:

> Camp David is not a model for us to try to replicate. In these days of decreased funding, we are not about to create Camp David-type arrangements. We will do what is necessary and within our means. But the peace process is not a payoff process.

The main lesson flowing from these various considerations is that it is not enough to get a group of Israeli generals together to design a scheme for Israel's security without the Golan Heights. Any such scheme has to meet some tough political and economic criteria. Apart from the question of whether this one is acceptable to the Syrians (would Assad ever permit his capital to be demilitarized?), fundamental issues remain. On what technologies is the new plan based and what kind of price tag are we talking about?

Even if the money is available, expensive American technology does not in all circumstances neutralize superior numbers of Russian-equipped forces. General Norman Schwarzkopf did not fight the Iraqi army with the same numerical disadvantage that Israel suffers on the Golan: he unleashed American airpower for six weeks in order to level the playing field by smashing a large proportion of Iraqi armor. Only then, with quantitative (as well as qualitative) superiority on his side, did he launch his ground campaign. It is important to remember that territory and population are constants of military power; technological advantages are only effective until countermeasures are developed.

Rabin knows that Israel cannot afford a six-week air campaign, but he will still seek technological compensation for the loss of territory. The great danger is that, having committed himself so deeply to a withdrawal from the Golan, he may proceed on the assumption that this compensation is in the pipeline, only to discover when it is too late that the necessary increases in U.S. aid are not forthcoming.

MONEY and technology were not the only instruments of the 1970's peace paradigm; it also included the deployment of Americans, albeit as observers, along Israel's southern border. In 1982 the Begin government went one step further than placing civilian technicians in the Sinai passes; once Israel completed its Sinai withdrawal, it asked for and received a three-battalion uniformed peacekeeping presence called the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), which contained one American front-line infantry battalion as well as a civilian observer unit. Could this idea now be applied to the Golan Heights as well? What would be the size or mission of this presence?

Right now Rabin is only talking about replicating the Sinai MFO. Government statements refer to American "monitors" on the Golan Heights whose mission would be to verify that the provisions of the military annex of any Israeli-Syrian peace treaty were kept. In practical terms, monitors count tanks; they make sure that each side does not deploy, in a clearly demarcated limited-forces zone, any more armored vehicles than are specif-

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ically allotted by a peace agreement. Monitors do not engage in round-the-clock early-warning that might look deeply into the territory of the other side. Their inspections are periodic and geographically delimited: they may occur twice a month or at any frequency that the parties decide.

While only monitors are being sought in Israel's opening position, there are reasons to think that this mission would considerably expand. First, the requirements of the U.S. military establishment would likely alter the character of any American Golan deployment. Of course, if matters were left to the Pentagon alone, it would probably seek to avoid a long-term commitment of its dwindling forces. In an era in which the standing forces of the U.S. Army are being slashed down to ten divisions by 1999, even token deployments can bite deeply when the needs for troop rotation or training are taken into account.

But should the U.S. Army be ordered by the White House to make a Golan force commitment, considerations of security could easily drive up the size of the force. In Sinai, the American battalion is deployed in a southern sector that extends from Eilat southward to Sharm el-Sheikh. American soldiers are not sitting in northern and central Sinai along the major routes of advance that the Egyptian army would use if it wanted to attack Israel. But in the narrower Golan, it would be much more difficult to keep the Americans "out of harm's way." They would be in close proximity to likely routes of advance in any Israeli-Syrian conflict.

American military planners would try to avoid exposing their soldiers to situations for which they were inadequately equipped. Or they might protest against attempts to give them a narrowly defined mission when strategic risks called for more robust preparations—as was the case in Lebanon in 1983 and Somalia in 1993. In the Golan, such considerations would drive American planners to seek at least the minimal force necessary for self-defense in armored warfare. According to a December 1993 study prepared for the Department of Defense by the RAND corporation, that would be a 5,000-man mechanized or armored brigade.

Second, expanding the role of the American force might serve as a tempting way to break any Syrian-Israeli deadlock over security arrangements. If at a future Camp David summit with Clinton and Assad, Rabin were to insist on keeping extra-territorial early-warning stations, the Syrians would resist. But rather than let the negotiations fail, Clinton might well propose putting American forces in Israel's early-warning positions. This would be considerably cheaper than buying Israel a whole fleet of JSTARS aircraft.

Alternatively, if Rabin could not obtain deep demilitarization of southern Syria or cutbacks in its standing army, a more robust American tripwire force might be offered to give Israel the security that it had failed to obtain directly from the Syrians. An armored American presence on the Golan, moreover, might help Rabin market a Golan withdrawal to a wary Israeli public. Monitors on the model of the Sinai MFO would not offer such assurance. The American contingent in the MFO is made up of only light infantry with little or no anti-tank capability. If Egyptian forces moved en masse into Sinai, the U.S. mission would not be to stop them but rather to observe and report. A duplicate of the MFO on the Golan would thus leave Israel insecure. On the other hand, a powerful deterrent force—or so some argue—would address the strong Israeli fears about the Golan pullout.

In short, the negotiating process over the Golan Heights is likely to make demands on the U.S. that are very different from the Sinai case. Yet these demands would come at a time when Washington was least prepared to meet them.

Regardless of the actual size of the force, an American presence on the Golan Heights would probably have to be tied to some kind of American security guarantee to Israel. During the cold war, when Washington was aggressively setting up new alliances around the periphery of the Soviet Union, such security guarantees made a certain sense for small states like Israel. But the U.S. in the post-cold-war era is in a process of contraction. Forward-deployed military forces are being brought back from Europe and the Far East, and America is trying to get its allies to accept a more equitable share of the worldwide defense burden. To seek American guarantees for Israel now entails running against the grain of contemporary history.

So, too, does the idea of putting U.S. troops on the Golan Heights. This idea is controversial not because Likud sympathizers in Washington oppose it (which is what some in the Rabin government imagine), but because it is so out of step with many current trend lines. Even before the debate on the Golan got started, Republican leaders like Senators Bob Dole and Don Nickles were challenging the Clinton administration's ambitious worldwide peacekeeping plans. They were able to turn the administration around as the public mood on peacekeeping changed in the aftermath of the October 1993 killing of eighteen U.S. Army Rangers in Somalia. The new mood led Congressman Lee Hamilton to confess in March 1994: "If the Bosnians signed an agreement today, and the President came up tomorrow to ask us for troops, he wouldn't get them."

Not only is there doubt about the applicability of the 1970's peace paradigm today, there is also reason to question whether America's motivation to implement it remains the same.

When Secretary of State Henry Kissinger engaged in shuttle diplomacy in 1975, moving the parties to a territorial settlement was a matter of real urgency from the standpoint of U.S. interests. The 1973 Yom Kippur War had ended with

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an American nuclear alert, indicating that regional wars between military clients of the U.S. and USSR could escalate to the level of superpower confrontation. Added to this security dimension was a world oil shortage that gave Saudi Arabia the leverage to press a host of political demands on the U.S., including Israel's withdrawal from disputed territories.

Throughout the decade, U.S. policy oscillated between confrontation and collaboration with the Soviets in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Kissinger clearly sought to reduce Soviet influence in the Middle East in general and in Arab-Israeli peace negotiations in particular. But that was not the aim of other American policy-makers. William Rogers, Kissinger's immediate predecessor as Secretary of State, pursued the Two- and Four-Power Talks with the USSR in 1969-70; this drove Washington to stake out substantive positions on Israeli withdrawal that were not far from those of Moscow: in the famous Rogers Plan, the U.S. spoke for the first time about only "insubstantial alterations" in Israel's pre-'67 borders. Later, Jimmy Carter's Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, renewed this line of policy with the October 1977 U.S.-Soviet Joint Statement on the Middle East that further pulled American policy in the Soviet direction.

When the Soviets were given less consideration, however, American viewpoints on the extent of a required Israeli withdrawal were not always so harsh. For example, President Gerald Ford sent a letter to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on September 1, 1975 that stated:

> The U.S. has not developed a final position on borders. Should it do so it will give great weight to Israel's position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights.

Even regarding the West Bank, U.S. officials have not always strictly thought that the "land-for-peace" option would have to be implemented; creative alternatives might be pursued. Thus George Shultz, who served as Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan, confesses in his memoirs:

> The words associated with that resolution [U.N. Resolution 242], "territory for peace," would have to be treated with flexibility. . . . The many functions of government would have to be controlled in different ways, with total or mixed control following a variable pattern and distributed in different ways among Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians.

Now that the Soviet Union has ceased to exist, there is even less reason for the U.S. to go on pursuing a policy on Israeli withdrawal which was originally designed to take the Soviets into account. A third world war is not about to emanate from the Middle East; Arab states will not abandon their pro-Western orientation and run to become Soviet clients.

Some analysts, to be sure, think that Islamic fundamentalism has replaced the Soviet Union as the threat to be placated by an Israeli pullback to the 1967 lines. But Islamic fundamentalism clearly thrives separately from the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel's borders have nothing to do with the status of Algeria or even Egypt's internal situation. If anything, the peace process has been accompanied by an increase in radical Islamic terror among the Palestinians.

THERE are those who might claim that the U.S. has become largely irrelevant to the Arab-Israeli peace process—and indeed, the Rabin government circumvented the Clinton administration in closing deals with the PLO and Jordan through secret diplomacy. But should Israel and the Palestinians ever get to final-status talks, the U.S. will probably play a greater part, and its role is still clearly central to the Syrian track. What then should that role be now that the old paradigm of the 1970's has become obsolete?

One thing it should *not* be is to press for arrangements that are simply unrealistic: an American/Canadian peace that Damascus has no intention of providing; a withdrawal from the Golan Heights that a majority of Israelis would view as a national tragedy and an irresponsible risk; a promise of billions of American dollars and the dispatch of American troops against the clear drift of American public opinion.

If, in spite of everything, a democratically-elected government in Israel decides to cede the Golan to Syria, that is its business. But such a government should not be driven by the assumption that it is doing what Washington has long sought and that it will therefore be handsomely rewarded. It should be driven by what the Syrians are offering in return.

What about the future of the peace process in general? Here, too, a new approach is called for. In the Persian Gulf, U.S. declaratory policy is based on protecting Gulf security; no one talks about starting with a peace process between Iraq and Kuwait. But in the Arab-Israeli sector the order of this basic logic has been reversed. First, Israel is called on to establish the criteria of peace (i.e., withdrawal) and then the U.S. and Israel try to address security. It is probably the Israelis rather than the Americans who have given this primacy to peace. Kissinger once noted, "Only a country that had never known peace could have attached so much importance to that phrase"; most wars, as he points out, have broken out between countries in a state of peace. Lately, Israel has been voicing a veritably millennial concept of peace, with rhetoric about a New Middle East. Remembering that security must precede peace would help bring the process back down to earth.

In the meantime, recognizing that "land for cash" has lost its relevance would inject a new and much-needed dose of realism into the calculations both of the U.S. and of Israel.

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Juries on Trial

Richard A. Posner

In recent years, a series of highly publicized criminal trials in which obviously guilty defendants were acquitted by juries (or convicted only of much lesser offenses than they had actually committed) has made the American jury a controversial institution. Civil juries have rendered some astonishing verdicts as well, ladling out billions in other people's money with insouciance and attracting a drumbeat of criticism from the business community. Concern has also been expressed about the sheer cost and the protracted nature of jury trials and about the hardship to jurors of having to sit through lengthy trials, increasingly under the glare of the television camera.

The growing controversy over the jury, part of a growing dissatisfaction with the American way in law in general, makes timely the publication of two well-written and informative books, one by Jeffrey Abramson, a lawyer and political scientist, the other by Stephen J. Adler, a journalist.*

The scope of these two books is different. Abramson's concern in *We, the Jury* is almost exclusively with criminal cases. Canvassing the scholarly literature—mainly historical and psychological—but supplementing it with discussions of real cases, he tells the story of the jury's transformation from a body of neighbors, expected to decide a case deliberatively on the basis of their first-hand knowledge of the parties and the facts and their shared understanding of the law and of the moral temper of the community, to a group of strangers, carefully selected to know nothing about the case but instead to "represent" racial and other interest groups in our heterogeneous modern society.

Adler's *The Jury* covers the civil as well as the criminal jury, and it is primarily anecdotal. He has reconstructed a number of recent trials with the aid of the recollections of the participants (including the jurors themselves), and he bases his evaluation of the jury system and his recommendations for improving it mainly on these reconstructions.

The problem with both anecdotage and case studies as proof is that in a society as vast, various, opulent, observed, and complex as modern America, such evidence can make any pathology, however rare, seem common. Still, anecdotes make for a good read, and some of Adler's are shocking indeed, as when he notes, with reference to the $10.5-billion award against Texaco in a suit by Pennzoil for interference with contract, the jurors' later explanation "that they had added $1 billion to the award for each of the Texaco lawyers they had most despised."

Of the two books, Abramson's is longer and deeper, but is marred by sentimentality. Adler's is more hard-headed, but probably a little too pessimistic. This difference can be traced to the authors' priorities. In ideology, Abramson is a populist, enthralled by the spectacle of ordinary people sitting in judgment; he asks us "to treasure the particularly rich conversations a democratic assembly inspires." By contrast, Adler, the legal-affairs editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, although he pays lip service to the democratic character and function of the jury system, is more concerned with the risk of error that is created when decision-making is handed to amateurs.

Yet to a remarkable extent the authors agree: both that juries make a lot of mistakes and that the system can be improved by paying more careful attention to the selection of jurors and to the procedures employed in jury trials. I can therefore commend both books to anyone interested in the American jury system.

But I want to offer a contrasting perspective, based partly on my own experience as a federal appellate judge who has from time to time conducted civil jury trials in the federal district (trial) courts of Illinois and Indiana, and partly on what I have heard and read. (To the extent that my account is itself anecdotal and impressionistic, it should be discounted accordingly.)

To get a proper grasp on the subject it is necessary to have in mind three sets of distinctions, none of which engages the attention of either author: between the jury in the United States and the jury in the rest of the world; in the United States, between the jury in state courts and the jury in federal courts; and, again in the United States, between juries in civil and in criminal cases.

Ours is not the only nation that uses juries. But it probably is the only nation that uses juries to any significant extent in *civil* cases; and in criminal cases, it almost certainly uses the jury more frequently than any other nation does.

Granted, if we ask not about the use of the jury but about the use of lay persons as adjudicators, the international contrast is blurred a bit. Quite apart from the growth

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* Jeffrey Abramson, *We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy* (Basic Books, 308 pp., $25.00); Stephen J. Adler, *The Jury: Trial and Error in the American Courtroom* (Times Books, 285 pp., $25.00).

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of arbitration, some nations, notably Germany, use mixed panels of professional and lay judges in some cases. But with all necessary qualifications, the continued salience of the jury in American civil and criminal adjudication is in striking contrast to the practice in the rest of the world. We got the jury system from England; England has virtually abandoned it.

This unique fidelity to the jury system is in large part a legacy of the American distrust of officials, and in small part a testament to the political power of trial lawyers. The distrust has its root in colonial times, and is reflected in the constitutional guarantees of the right to trial by jury in federal courts in most civil and almost all criminal cases. Yet the same distrust is even more deeply entrenched in the state courts, where it is reinforced by the low professional quality and rampant politicization of many of the state judiciaries, led by Texas. Distrust of officialdom retards the funding of government at levels that would enable better officials to be obtained, and the resulting poor performance of the officials strengthens the distrust.

The federal courts are on the whole of higher quality and less politicized than the state courts, partly because federal judges are not elected and have more secure tenure. Yet even the federal judiciary is not a merit system, and there is a large variance in the professional competence of federal judges.

Hence the biggest practical reason for preserving the jury system in the United States: juries often improve the quality and impartiality of adjudication in courts where the judges are weak or political (or corrupt). This point is in tension with Adler's concern about the competence of jurors, and is not the same thing as Abramson's belief in the jury as a model democratic institution.

But even if one does not agree with Abramson that discussion among six or twelve nonprofessionals of matters of which they may have no first-hand experience or knowledge is a reliable formula for generating what he calls "collective wisdom," still, a group of people drawn more or less at random from the population, and charged with careful consideration of a dispute not their own, *can* offer a useful supplement to a professional cadre of uncertain quality and commitment to justice. It can, in particular, offer a potential leaven of common sense, of familiarity with the everyday world and its denizens, and perhaps even a more perfect disinterest, since jurors have no career stakes in the verdicts they render.

In any case, distrust of officialdom runs so deep in this country that it is unthinkable that today or in the foreseeable future criminal verdicts would be accepted by the public if the accused did not have the right to insist on a jury of lay persons. But the situation is not so clear with respect to civil cases, especially in the federal courts.

IT MIGHT not be the worst idea—though to adopt it for the federal courts would require amending the Seventh Amendment—to make juries in civil cases discretionary with the judge. In my experience (and the statistics back this up), a civil jury trial takes twice as long on average as a civil bench trial and, what is worse, greatly magnifies inequalities in the competence of the opposing lawyers. Then, too, as Adler's case studies show, jurors are at sea in dealing with complex cases—cases dealing with modern technology or turning on sophisticated statistical evidence or counterintuitive legal doctrines, or pitting a sympathetic individual against a vast and soulless enterprise. Such cases are common in federal courts.

My experience has been that when a case turns on which witnesses are lying (more), juries do fine; often, the social distance between witness and juror is less than between witness and judge, giving the juror a superior ability to determine the witness's sincerity. In cases of that sort, I would expect that, under the discretionary regime I have proposed, judges like myself who have led sheltered lives, and do not consider themselves well-endowed with street smarts or the common touch, would convene a jury and defer to its findings concerning the believability of the various witnesses.

But not all civil cases turn on the issue of lying. For complex modern cases, both Abramson and Adler propose a series of reforms to make the jury's task easier: allowing jurors to take notes and ask questions; authorizing the judge to instruct the jury in the law at the beginning and during the trial, as well as when it is over; and selecting jurors with some eye to competence as distinct from representativeness.

Sensible as they are, I do not think these reforms would have seismic effects. The reason is that they have been made, to a great extent, in the federal courts already. Though practice differs from judge to judge, I have always permitted jurors to take notes and ask questions; I have tried to tell them about the case as it proceeds; I have rewritten the instructions they receive about the law, to eliminate all jargon; I have given them copies of the instructions to take into the jury room for their deliberations, rather than just reading the instructions to them aloud; and I have insisted that the lawyers give the jurors copies of all trial exhibits when the exhibits are first mentioned rather than for the first time when the trial is over and the jury's deliberations begin. Other federal trial judges do even more than I to facilitate the jury's performance of its task. That performance, nevertheless, too often remains problematic.

As for the selection of jurors, although the federal court system is nominally committed to random selection, the practice in most federal courts is different. The names of potential jurors are usually taken from the voter-registration lists, so that people whose sense of civic responsibility is insufficient to motivate them to register to vote are in practice disqualified from serving.

The people whose names *are* chosen in this way are sent summonses to jury duty, but the most irresponsible simply ignore them, and there is rarely any follow-up.

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Adler says that for the nation as a whole, the "no-show" rate is 55 percent. Next, when the so-far cooperative ones are questioned by the judge as part of the process of selecting a jury for a particular case, those who do not want to serve make up excuses and are usually let off. And then there are the challenges "for cause," which hive off jurors who are likely to be partial to one side or another; and the peremptory challenges, which enable the lawyers to act on an inarticulable hunch to eliminate some of the prospective jurors who remain.

Those who make it through this gauntlet are not a random sample of the inhabitants of the federal judicial district. They are usually above average in competence, civic-mindedness, and sense of responsibility. Contrary to legend, retired people are underrepresented rather than overrepresented on juries. My impression is that federal juries are extremely conscientious and that when they go astray, it is not because of apathy or laziness but, again, because the case is too difficult for lay people to understand or the lawyers have botched the trial or were unequally matched.

BOTH Abramson and Adler are concerned that in our zeal to ensure that juries are impartial, we have reduced their quality. It is true that if a juror knows a lot about the subject matter of a case, he is quite likely to be challenged successfully "for cause"; and the lawyer with the weaker case may even use a peremptory challenge to strike him, believing that his client will have a better chance with a confused jury. Abramson wants to abolish the peremptory challenge. But he ignores the factors which I have sketched that raise the quality of the jury, or at least the federal jury, above the average for the community.

He does, however, make an important distinction between two "models" of jury deliberation, and it is a distinction that bears on the issue of selection. In one model, the jury is viewed as a deliberative body. In the other, jurors are viewed as representatives of different groups in the community (racial and sexual, for example), and the jury's decision-making process as a form of interest-group politics.

Abramson argues that the modern emphasis on representativenesss is consistent with the older, deliberative model as well, because a diverse group of people has collectively more knowledge and insight than a homogeneous group, and this makes for more fruitful deliberations and more robust decisions. I agree in principle, but unfortunately there is no reliable method for forcing jurors to deliberate in good faith rather than to vote their prejudices.

In sum, even though federal jurors are a reasonably select group of people, and are given by most federal judges all the help they could reasonably ask, the jury system in civil cases remains time-consuming and, if the case is complex, unreliable. I think it is romanticizing, or pandering to the "every man a king" strain in American culture, to suppose that average people are deep wells of wisdom with a pumping station in every jury room. And I do not think we need to worry that judgments rendered by the judge alone in civil cases would lack legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

GIVEN his emphasis on the democratic character of trial by jury, it is odd that Abramson does not mention John Stuart Mill's argument for the jury system: that it gives the common man an education in government, since jurors are *ad-hoc* officials. How far that argument holds for the modern United States, a nation in which democracy has a much stronger grip than it had in mid-19th-century England, I am not prepared to say. But I do think that one of Abramson's democracy-mongering proposals is terrible. Jurors are routinely told that they are required to follow the law, whether or not they agree with it. Abramson proposes that they be told instead, or in addition, that they are entitled to disregard the law.

His argument is twofold. First, if trial by jury is about democracy, jurors should be empowered to make as well as to apply law. But this is to fetishize democracy and ignore competing values. Pushed to its logical extreme (though Abramson himself would not push it that far), it would entitle juries to condemn people who had not violated any law announced before their condemnation. Abramson says a jury's nullification of the law would "give us the full drama of democracy." I can do without that particular spectacle. "People's justice" has a deservedly bad name.

Second, Abramson argues that since a certain amount of jury nullification goes on anyway, *sub rosa*, it should be brought out into the open. Why? One might as well say that since there is a lot of murder even though murder is against the law, we should repeal the murder statutes.

An invitation to jury nullification is particularly irresponsible at the present time, when racial line-drawing is reappearing in jury deliberations. Abramson is worried about black jurors voting to acquit black defendants in a gesture of racial solidarity (he gives examples), but he is even more worried about discrimination against blacks in capital cases. As he himself points out, however, it is not true that black murderers are more likely than white ones to be sentenced to death. Rather, white *or* black murderers of whites are more likely to be sentenced to death than murderers (again, regardless of race) of blacks. In other words, juries seem to set a higher value on white lives than on black lives, and this disparity holds even when differences in the age or sex of the victim or the other circumstances of the murder are held constant.

I suspect, however, that the difference is not racial at all, but that it is based on income: in our culture, the lives of middle- or high-income people are implicitly valued at a higher rate than the lives of lower-income people (who are disproportionately black), and it would make no difference whether the sentencing decision were made by a jury or by a judge.

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For the near future, at least, we are stuck, for good or ill, with the jury system, civil as well as criminal; and the sensible reforms proposed by Abramson and Adler—reforms already in place in most federal courts—will bring about only modest improvements. But, and here I embark on the treacherous waters of social prophecy, in the long run the jury, or at least the civil jury, is probably doomed.

As American law and society become ever more complex, the jury's cognitive limitations will become ever more palpable and socially costly. The modern jury is too expensive, and not only in time—though time is what the courts have least of. As Abramson points out in one of the most interesting chapters of his book, in big cases nowadays each side is likely to hire one of the growing number of consulting firms that use the techniques of social science to advise on jury selection and on effective communication with jurors. Abramson believes that the science employed in "scientific" jury selection is spurious. The market disagrees. Whoever is right, there is no doubt that the use of these consultants adds to the expense of trial by jury and may not improve the accuracy of verdicts. It also magnifies the effect on case outcomes of disparity in resources between litigants. Pity the poor litigant who cannot afford a jury consultant, but whose opponent can.

Already the American jury has been cut down quite a bit. In the federal courts and in most states, the standard civil jury is now down to six persons from the traditional twelve. There is a danger of a vicious cycle here, since the smaller the jury, the more erratic its performance is likely to be (because it is a smaller sample of the population), so that reducing the size of the jury can itself impair the rationale for trial by jury.

In addition, more and more states do not require that the jury be unanimous, and this makes for shorter and—Abramson argues—more perfunctory deliberations, since holdouts need no longer be convinced that their position is incorrect. So again, an effort to make the jury cheaper also makes it worse; a reduction in administrative costs is offset by an increase in error costs. Finally, a diminishing percentage of all trials are jury trials, as crowded dockets cause judges to resolve more and more cases at an earlier stage or push litigants into alternative methods of dispute resolution.

There are also signs that judging is becoming more of a career in the United States, as judicial hierarchies lengthen and more and more judges climb the lengthening career ladder over a period of many years. As the judiciary becomes more dependably and predictably professional (though possibly less interesting), the felt need for supplementation by lay persons will diminish. The benefits of the jury will have declined just when the costs are rising.

So perhaps some day we will outgrow the jury. Still, for now, it is very much with us, and anyone wishing to understand it could do worse than consult these two books, despite their joint and several deficiencies.

An Amateur Jew

Herb Greer

I FIRST heard of actual Jews as a child, at a cocktail party in Santa Fe, New Mexico just before World War II. Unnoticed by my father and his Masonic guests, I wandered idly among the adults, small, inconspicuous, furtively tasting half-empty drinks while homing in on snatches of a peculiar discussion. The remarks were what I later came to know as anti-Semitic clichés: about money, noses, ambition, slyness, and all the rest. The tone of this suburban billingsgate was chummy, almost chortling, as if passwords or signs of mutual recognition were being exchanged.

About two years later, at a similar gathering, I overheard the same pattern of chat—but the remarks had acquired a context. In recent months I had chanced across a couple of books that described a prejudice called anti-Semitism, and made it sound very unpleasant, not to say evil. The text of these books was very specific about the received ideas which informed the prejudice, and—precocious as I was, and given to annoying grown-ups—I now recognized these concepts in our living room, nodded to myself, and waited for a pause in the conversation.

"Why," I demanded in an abrupt and deliberately piercing voice, "is everybody talking about the Jews? What's wrong with the Jews?"

My father, a lawyer from Ohio

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who prided himself on his sense of fairness, flushed scarlet and hustled me out of the room, muttering through his teeth, "Nothing. Nothing's wrong with the Jews. Go outside and play." He never did give me a proper answer to my half-shouted query, but then I never really expected one. For me, the idea was to make an embarrassing scene, and my success produced a warm feeling which later rose inside me whenever I overheard or read even neutral references to Jews or to a Jew.

In due course, like most of my American generation, I did acquire a more rounded (and grimmer) sense of what it meant to be on the wrong end of anti-Semitism. But, as a young *goy* raised in a provincial Wasp environment, I drew my idea of what a real Jew might be mainly from newsreels and books. There seemed to be no obvious connection between what I learned and my real-life schoolmates in New Mexico and California who said they were Jewish (the suffix "-ish" seemed to dilute the force of the adjective); to me, they were just kids I knew with German- or Russian-sounding names, some even called after colors, like Green.

I never thought of these Jewish kids as *Jews*, as in the newsreels and books. Essentially I felt that a Jew in that sense was something ethereal, quasi-fictional, a lean or scrawny but innocent personage with haunted eyes who was likely to be hounded, oppressed, and/or killed by Nazis—that is, thugs and/or black-uniformed officials who talked about Jews being subhuman, while insisting that the same Jews were fiendishly clever and omnipotent in finance and certain areas of politics (like conspiracies and Communism), yet also easily recognized by their glittering eyes, slightly olive skin, and very prominent noses.

Being a moderately bright boy, I noticed the contradiction between subhuman and omnipotent, and it did not escape me that all kinds of obviously un-Jewish people were nasally aquiline, including a couple of my Armenian friends from Fresno, an Italian neighbor in Los Angeles, and quite a few of the Navajo, Cochti, and Hopi Indians who came into Santa Fe on weekends to make jewelry for tourists. The whole business was very confusing when I thought about it, which was less often as time went on. Still, being something of a loner myself, and frequently under threat from bullying, I more or less unconsciously nursed that original and rather vague warm feeling into a clear-cut solidarity with "the Jews," who were by definition under threat all the time.

AFTER moving to London in the 1950's, I discovered a curious fact. Where I had come from, Jews as such were taken for granted. True, they were considered more or less defective, so to speak, but still they were part of the American context. The English, however, saw them differently—as more exotic, not totally British; and very few of my English friends seemed to get the point of Jewish jokes.

In the London suburb of Hampstead, where I lived, Jews tended to be older and very obviously foreign, with German accents and sometimes (especially among the older women) a haunted look I remembered from films. Some of them—quite a few, in fact—were refugees from Hitler, with grim family stories that matched nothing in my own background and experience. Their quality of belonging to an utterly foreign past aroused a sympathy in me which was subtly unpleasant. I was shut out of the exotic world of these people, and this put my fellow-feeling under a certain pressure, without quite destroying it.

In the library of the British Museum I used my spare time to search out a more intellectual and historical dimension of the vague and personal term, Jew. After reading the Bible twice, I went on to the Roman-era historian Josephus and then to much more recent works, delving particularly into the immigrant experience in America and Britain, and also exploring the peculiar fabric of ritual which divides the Jewish year. I began to reexamine the special Jewish ingredients in American literature: Yiddish slang, which somehow I had never connected with Jews, along with familiar echoes of humor and ironic *Weltschmerz*. This research of mine was very chaotic and unsatisfactory, and it had a paradoxical effect: not of making me feel "Jewish" (such an idea never occurred to me) but of confirming and deepening my American identity.

In my desultory reading I happened across an interesting story by the American writer Paul Goodman (later to become famous as the author of *Growing Up Absurd*). It concerned a naive young man caught up in a street incident in which a Jew is hounded and harassed by a gaggle of louts. The naive young man protests mildly, suggesting that they leave the Jew alone. Instantly the louts turn on the young man and accuse *him* of being a Jew. He tells them he is not, but they insist, and continue to insist, until the young man, giving up, realizes that in some sense, yes, he really is a Jew, whether Jewish or not, and admits as much to the louts. This story made a deep impression on me.

IN THE 60's, again in Hampstead, I acquired a neighbor and friend, the Israeli sculptor Menashe Kadishman. He and I saw a lot of each other, and I spent some time in his circle. Constantly hearing Hebrew conversation, I began, tourist-fashion, to pick up scraps of the language, along with an intense partisanship on the side of Israel. This came to a white heat during the Six-Day War of 1967, when I seriously considered volunteering for service, or at least journalistic employment in the Middle East.

My inquiries opened a brief prospect of working as a cameraman for NBC; but on the day before I was scheduled to leave, the war ended. Menashe, observing my rather excessive indignation at the missed opportunity, laughed and called me an "amateur Jew"—in Hebrew, *yehudi ḥovev*.

From then on I used this term in a jocular way when talking to other Israelis, who I found had not heard it before and tended to laugh tolerantly. Although I had not the slightest intention of converting to Judaism, or of emigrat-

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ing to Israel, the phrase gave me a pleasant sense of belonging.

But I still had no clearer sense of what a Jew really was. Dissatisfied with catchwords like "the chosen people," and finding the biblical covenants a bit abstract, I began to harass my Jewish friends with questions. In conversation I discovered Jewish Americans and other Jews in England and elsewhere who surprisingly had no better idea of the answer than I had already acquired with my reading. ("If your mother is a Jew, you're a Jew, and that's it!" said Menashe, which only set the question back a generation.) But they could take the thing-in-itself for granted in a way that I could not. They also took anti-Semitism for granted, and I soon saw that the reality of Jewishness was perversely confirmed by the hostility, subtle and not so subtle, of *goyim*, even sympathetic ones like me.

One evening in Berlin quite a few years later, speaking to an acquaintance, a famous American Jewish intellectual, I threw out a jocular reference to my status as a *yehudi ḥovev*. Unlike my Israeli friends, he did not smile. On the contrary, he recoiled visibly, and looked away. "Of course," he said finally, "those were *secular* Israelis." I felt a bit like the tramp in the joke who tries to establish his Catholic credentials by confiding to a monsignor that his father was a priest and his mother a nun.

True, I had not pretended to be a Jew, not really. Nevertheless, a door was closed in my face that evening, and I understood well enough that this not-very-serious auxiliary tag of mine was in fact quite problematic—at least in an American context, where a deeper and more dangerous tension seemed to be at stake, deeper even than among my Israeli friends. I decided that it would be best to lay my nickname (and whatever went with it) aside for a while, and maybe for good.

I WAS now living in Manchester, England. Coming out of the theater one night in early December, I was accosted in the street by two young men. They were dressed in dark suits and tieless white shirts, with pale intense faces that I remembered from somewhere, and they were friendly. As they spoke to me, the image came back: a painting by the American artist Bernard Perlin in London's Tate Gallery: "Orthodox Boys." But the hats in front of me were not *yarmulkes*, just ordinary black trilbies.

"Are you a Jew?" asked one of the young men. He was carrying a large clear plastic bag which seemed to be full of metal objects. I was startled, but smiled. "Not really," I said. "Just a *yehudi ḥovev*."

He blinked at me. "What?"

"You know *ivrit*?" I asked. "*Yehudi ḥovev*. It means *amateur* Jew."

The young man was not at all upset; he seemed genuinely puzzled at my use of Hebrew. "What do you mean, amateur Jew?" he asked. Before I could explain, he pressed another question. "You know Hanukkah?"

"Of course I know it," I said, thinking that this was becoming very odd, because I also knew that Jews did not proselytize.

"So you're a Jew?" asked his friend. Both of them were giving off what in the 60's were called very warm vibes.

"Honestly," I said, "I'm not really Jewish. Actually I'm Irish-American, a Celt. My name is Greer, from the Scots name Macgregor. Let me explain." And I told him briefly about my secular Israeli friends in London, how I had picked up scraps of Hebrew, and so on. The two young men listened intently. As I told the story, I began to realize that they did not quite believe me about being Irish. This was, sort of, the Paul Goodman story turned inside out.

Remembering Berlin, I felt it was important to convince them, and for several minutes we continued to chat. Other religious terms came up which I explained that I knew, but from books, because as an American Gentile I had grown up more exposed to Jewish culture than the normal Englishman. Still, the more I denied it, the more they seemed convinced that I was a sort of lapsed or secular Jew, and the friendlier they became.

It was awkward, because I liked them. They were nice boys, and they were sympathetic, and appeared to be concerned about me, and I wondered how I was going to extricate myself from this tangle. In the end, at a loss, I gave up, but without saying that I was Jewish. Finally the first young man reached into his plastic bag and brought out a small clear sack containing a tin menorah, a box of candles, and a leaflet.

"You know what this is?" he asked, obviously sure that I did know.

"Certainly," I confirmed. "It's a menorah for Hanukkah."

"Do you have one at home?"

"No. Because—"

But he was holding it out. "I know," he said, "you're not a Jew. But I'm going to give it to you anyway. Please."

I felt hideously guilty. "Look—"

"No, please. It's all right. Some people have forgotten some of these things, and we want to remind them." He held out the little plastic bag. "You have it." I accepted the gift sheepishly.

"Thank you," I said.

"That's all right."

"Take care. Good night." I shook hands with one and then the other, but they were already checking out the rest of the thinning theater crowd.

At home I took out and read the leaflet, which contained many details about Hanukkah, including the historical background, the meaning of the lights, and even a recipe for potato *latkes*. I saw that it was published by the Lubavitch Foundation of Great Britain. Later I made inquiries and learned about their work, and what had happened outside the theater fell into place—except that I was more than ever only a *yehudi ḥovev*. By persisting in their mistake, they had given real force and meaning to my Hebrew epithet.

Why, I asked myself, had they approached me in the first place? In my surprise it had not occurred to me to put the question to *them*. I knew there was nothing about me, *prima facie*, to suggest Jewish origins, but through all those years of wondering and, so to speak, spiritual exploring, had something rubbed off after all? Or was there a subtle echo from somewhere

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back in the immense geometric spread of my ancestry?

Of course my Berlin acquaintance would have disapproved of such speculation, perhaps damning it as playing with things that I did not begin to understand. But this delicate strength which drew me, this intangible force—unofficial, secular, whatever—was quite genuine, and despite anything it seemed important and valuable.

THERE was one frontier left where I might explore the mystery a little further: Israel itself. When, suddenly, an invitation came from Tel Aviv to write a film script, I jumped at it. What would I discover—about Jews, about myself, about this half-humorous amateur status of mine? My old friend Menashe Kadishman, now internationally famous, was in Tel Aviv. Looking down from my El Al jet at the torn and tangled patterns of snow on the summits of the Alps, I wondered what he would make of his joke now.

Tel Aviv was a shock because it was not a shock. Walking down Dizengoff Street, not looking at the Hebrew signs, I might have been on the main drag of a French Mediterranean port. Later, as I toured cafés and a disco, the impression was the same. The night life, even in November, was warm, vibrant, exuberant. It did not matter that I understood almost nothing of what was said around me (except for the occasional snatches of American tourist conversation). This was a world I knew and belonged to, it was Europe. I had not expected to feel at home, but I did.

Part of that was the women. My God, so many beautiful women! On Dizengoff and Ben Yehuda they passed, heads up, dark, blonde, redheaded, superb, cocky, open, almost brash in the southern European fashion. Could I possibly be in the Middle East?

I met Menashe at his apartment, and after more than twenty years it was as though we had said goodbye the day before. He painted my portrait, and we discussed personal things, like how the city of Tel Aviv was screwing him over his studio. Ward-heeling, money, municipal bureaucracy—it sounded about as exotic as New York. And *yehudi ḥovev*? Yes, that was still good for a laugh, for him and for the visitors who trooped through his apartment while I was there. They smiled at the idea; again, none of them seemed to find anything shocking or strange about it.

Menashe's daughter Maya—dark, stunning, a film actress in her own right—drove me to Jerusalem to see the Old City. An army checkpoint was stopping cars in the street toward the eastern ramparts, so we returned to the other side and walked up through the Zion Gate, into the Jewish quarter, down to the Western Wall. And there I stood, at what in the Middle Ages was called the navel of the world, placing the flat of my hand against those great cold stones the color of onion skin. The back of my neck prickled. *Déjà vu* would be too corny for words, but I knew this place, and not just from television pictures.

Maya came back from the women's section, and we walked from the Wall through the western arcade of the Arab market, stopping once at a stall to ask directions to the Tower of David. As Maya spoke to the elderly Arab shopkeeper, he looked away sullenly and would not reply. His son, a bit embarrassed by the father's bad manners, spoke shyly, in bad Hebrew, and pointed us on our way. Maya hurried. She was nervous and wanted to get out of there. I took her arm. "Take it easy. You're safe with me."

But I did not really believe that. The old man had unsettled me, too, the arcade seemed suddenly rather dark, and I was grateful when we were out in the open air again, making our way down the twisting walk outside the walls and across the valley to where the car was waiting in the gathering dusk.

IN FACT nothing dramatic happened to me in Tel Aviv, or Jerusalem, or Akko, or anywhere else. I spent most of my days in a hotel room doing the job I had come to do. In the evenings there was time for visiting my old friend, eating out, and occasionally for talking with people I met in taxis and cafés.

No one brought up politics; I had to ask about it. But when I did, I found not a single person, not one, who believed in the so-called peace process. It was described to me as a game of footsie played by politicians who—especially on the Arab side—did not speak for their people. ("Five years ago," I was told, "Arafat was big. Now he is small.") The whole "process" was seen as a charade for the benefit of Americans, Europeans, and other spectators outside the Middle East, people who had no life-and-death stake in what happened here.

There was something else in Tel Aviv: a curious air which I had experienced before, in the mid-60's, in West Berlin. No one spoke of it, at least not to me, but there was the unmistakable tacit sense that—whatever the smiling politicians might say—everything, all of this, was in danger; deadly danger. This feeling was not always easy to sense in the modern streets of Tel Aviv; it was closer to hand in the south end of town around the clock tower and the older quarter of Jaffa. Here, the walls and buildings showed that I was in the Middle East after all, that Israel stood precariously on the very rim of my world, the European world.

On the highway to Ben-Gurion airport for my flight back to England, I gazed into the glow of a burning orange sunrise over the mountains which once marked the visible eastern frontier of Israel. With terrible vividness I remembered the eyes of the Arab shopkeeper in Jerusalem—a spark from the furnace of a corrosive and immutable enmity smoldering in millions of hearts beyond those mountains. It came to me that I too, even as a "*goy*," was an object of that hatred, and that it encompassed the whole of my world, as far as Europe, New York, San Francisco, Hawaii. How depressing, I mused, that so many of our politicians and journalists spend so much time and naive good faith trying to hide or obscure this adamantine fact!

This was the other side of my role as *yehudi ḥovev*, which, I saw now, was a little more real than either Menashe or I had imagined, and was far more widely shared.

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Black Kids and Basketball

Mark Gerson

As the columnist George Will said of the literature of the airplane, the most striking thing about the literature of basketball is that there is so little of it. An overwhelmingly black sport at all levels, basketball is—in the words of the late Pete Axthelm—"the city game." A nation that has agonized so passionately over racial issues and urban problems might be expected to consider the pastime of young black men in American cities in greater depth, and finally, it seems such an examination has begun.

This winter, two works, *Hoop Dreams*, a documentary movie produced by Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert, and *The Last Shot*, a book by Darcy Frey,* have penetrated the culture of urban basketball. While the movie is far more nuanced than the book, both portray basketball not as a pastime but as a pernicious system, one that encourages impoverished and impressionable young players to cede their lives to the impossible dream of a career in the National Basketball Association (NBA). The beneficiaries of this arrangement are predominantly (but not exclusively) white coaches, agents, and corporate executives. These adults transform the dreams that every playground player harbors into his "last shot."

Both *Hoop Dreams* and *The Last Shot* describe well how an efficient system channels the top basketball players from all over the country to the leading college teams. The process is fairly simple. Unofficial, paid-under-the-table scouts forage the playgrounds of urban America looking for preteen talent. The scouts report their findings to their clients, high-school coaches. The coaches then recruit these players with various incentives, from scholarships (in the case of parochial schools) to guaranteed starting positions and the attention of college scouts.

With most of the best young players on the top high-school teams, college scouts know where to look. If they miss anyone, an independent scout, writing for a newsletter like *Hoop Scoop*, is sure to find him. After informal recruiting that can last several years, the process intensifies as college coaches scavenge the nation, seeking to sign the player who will change the fortunes of their university. There are numerous summer camps where high-school players showcase their talents for college coaches, of which the Nike camp, sponsored by the sneaker company and officially called the Academic Betterment and Career Development (ABCD) program, is at the apex.

Those who perform best at Nike will be heavily recruited by the prominent college programs that are, in turn, feeders to the NBA. This means that famous college coaches will beg, cajole, and bombard the young ghetto players with letters and phone calls offering four-year scholarships. In order to qualify for this largesse, the high-school player must have accumulated a 2.0 grade-point average and achieved a score of 700 out of a possible 1600 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or a score of 18 out of a possible 35 on the American College Testing Program (ACT).

The recruiting process, like the entire business of collegiate athletics, is governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). To ensure that coaches, agents, or boosters do not compromise the amateur status of college athletes, the NCAA has constructed an extraordinary set of rules that includes bans on colorful recruiting brochures, stationery printed in more than two colors, and recruiting tapes longer than three minutes. The NCAA also forbids contact between coaches and players at the camps, although in the event of "unavoidable" contact, Rule 13.I.2.3-(e) of the NCAA manual allows for "normal civility." So coaches at Nike loiter in public areas seeking unavoidable contact with the young men they will be heavily recruiting in a few weeks.

Hoop Dreams, the product of nearly five years of filming, shows us this system at work through the lives of two young sensations from Chicago, Arthur Agee and William Gates. Recruited from different parts of Chicago, William and Arthur begin high school together at St. Joseph's High School, the alma mater of Isiah Thomas.† The two boys are forced to separate when financial considerations require Arthur to transfer to a public school, Marshall High. William has no more money than Arthur, but his coach arranges for Patricia Weir, the president of Encyclopaedia Britannica, to fund his remaining three years at St. Joseph's.

Though the young men pursue separate basketball careers, they share many experiences common to life in the inner city. Arthur's initially intact family is destroyed by his father, who abandons the household for a life on crack. As the fatherless Agee family slips into grinding poverty, Arthur disintegrates as well. His performance on the court is sub-par, and in his classes he remains on the cusp of failure. He begins to turn around only when his father, having abandoned drugs for religion, returns to the family and gradually begins to resume his proper role. Still, ir-

Mark Gerson, *whose article, "In the Classroom," appeared in our January issue, has also published in* First Things, Policy Review, *and* Beckett Basketball Monthly.

* Houghton-Mifflin, 230 pp., $19.95.

† Thomas, the point guard on the NBA championship Detroit Pistons in the 1980's, is the best small man ever to play basketball, at least since Bob Cousy.

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reparable damage has been done. Arthur's adolescence is marked by an event all too familiar in the lives of inner-city children: he has himself become a father—specifically, of two children by different women.

The theme of male abandonment is raised in William's case, too, when it is revealed that his father also left his son at birth. William, however, is determined to be different, and he is given an opportunity when his own daughter is born. He stays with (and eventually marries) the child's mother and shows constant concern for them both even as his basketball career takes an unexpected nosedive after he suffers a devastating injury. Throughout this physical and emotional trauma William remains an endearing young man, polite, respectful, industrious, eager to help himself and his family.

As two of Chicago's best high-school players, William and Arthur are offered scholarships to Division I colleges. Arthur, unable to pass his SAT, is relegated to Mineral Area Junior College in Montana, where the only blacks are on the basketball team. William's struggle with the ACT is painfully documented in the film. Hours and hours of preparation consistently fail to yield the coveted minimum score. Patricia Weir again steps in, enrolling William at no charge in the ACT review course run by Britannica. After numerous attempts, William eventually passes and is able to accept a scholarship to Marquette.

Patricia Weir is not the only adult in *Hoop Dreams* whose concern for the young players is unrelated to their performance on the court. There is Arthur's mother, Sheila Agee, who, despite daunting adversity, earns a degree as a nurse's assistant. A pillar of her community, she serves as a surrogate mother to Arthur's friend Shannon Johnson, who eventually succumbs nevertheless to a life of drugs and crime. Similarly, the teachers and counselors at Marshall High do everything in their power to help Arthur, though the disappearance of his father renders their efforts futile. *Hoop Dreams* is particularly good at showing the stubborn constraints on people who are not family members and who try to make a difference in the lives of troubled children.

But the relationships and institutions that do *not* exist in *Hoop Dreams* tell as much about the Chicago ghetto as those that do. Aside from the church, there are no "mediating institutions" to serve the social needs of the population, no organizations to soften the blows of poverty while also ensuring that the poor are equipped to become functioning members of society. It seems, indeed, that the only connections between the Chicago of Arthur Agee and William Gates and the outside world are basketball scouts and welfare checks. This circumstance, only implied in *Hoop Dreams*, becomes the gravamen of a social indictment in *The Last Shot.*

As with *Hoop Dreams*, *The Last Shot* is based upon a reporter's extensive journey into the culture of inner-city basketball, this time in New York. In his book, Darcy Frey tells the story of four basketball players living in the heart of Brooklyn's Coney Island and attending Abraham Lincoln High School nearby.

Urban renewal has transformed Coney Island into a mass of high-rise apartment buildings packed with people living in filth and drug-infested corridors. Perhaps the most fitting symbols of this community are the decade-old University of Georgia basketball programs that are passed around like holy relics because they contain a picture of a local boy, Eric "Spoon" Marbury, playing with Dominique Wilkins, now an NBA star. The one oasis is the basketball court, reverentially called "the Garden" (after Madison Square Garden, where the New York Knicks play) and kept in immaculate condition. Young residents of the projects play serious basketball in the Garden, where they are coached by knowledgeable and seasoned locals and are watched by high-school scouts.

Frey concentrates on several veterans of the Garden who play for the Lincoln High team. Their characters are quite different. Freshman Stephon Marbury, the legendary Eric's brother, is probably the most talented athlete of the bunch; though arrogant, he harbors a sense of tragedy, having witnessed several equally gifted brothers abandon their chance to escape the ghetto for pleasures long forgotten. Senior Corey Johnson, a smart young man with promising intellectual and athletic abilities, uses none of them and ends up a semi-employed unmarried teenage father. Only the team's center, Tchaka Shipp, who lives in a working-class neighborhood and has nothing but contempt for the residents of Coney Island, passes his SAT with no problem and finds himself in the midst of intense Division I recruiting.

To Frey, Coney Island is in the grip of rapacious companies and individuals who, to make a few dollars, have deliberately created a universe where the only choices for black youths are the NBA (very unlikely) or the streets (almost inevitable). Nike draws special opprobrium. Frey is outraged that the sneaker company expects eventually to profit from the top young players it brings to its camp and the free sneakers it provides to playground and high-school teams. He suggests sarcastically that such behavior "is what American entrepreneurship is all about."

Statements like these are what earned *The Last Shot* a rave review by Brent Staples on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review.* But they also point to the book's weakness. True, the lives of impressionable young players are full of basketball bankers who promise glory and riches in full knowledge that most of their young charges will end up with only a rapidly depreciating vault of memories. But until Americans stop enjoying college and professional basketball, these people will not go away.

The NCAA cannot control the system, and neither will the scornful pen of Darcy Frey. The real question is: can a young player be helped to acquire the values and

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the perspective that will allow him to prosper in a different field if as is overwhelmingly likely—he cannot make a career out of basketball?

Perhaps without realizing it, Frey answers this question by telling the story of Russell Thomas, the most endearing subject in his book. Russell, materially as poor as his neighbors, has a strong mother whose sole concern is to steer her son out of the ghetto. A good but not a great player, Russell is tempted by the possibility of a basketball career, but he has a contingency plan:

> I'm using basketball to go to a four-year school. What I really want is to graduate from college, start me a nice little family, and get me a nice little job as a registered nurse. But first I got to make sure I get that degree.

It is of course common to hear young basketball prospects talk this way; they are well-trained in the clichés of the trade. But Russell really appears to mean it. Acutely aware of his personal weaknesses, Russell tells his coach to hold his recruiting mail lest it make him too arrogant to study. In the end, after starring at a junior college (he could not accept an offer from Temple University because he failed to score a 700 on the SAT despite intense preparation), Russell receives a barrage of offers. Ultimately, he settles on a small Division II school where basketball will not distract him from his responsibilities as a student.

Russell Thomas is certainly an exception to Frey's implied rule that, for a playground player, life holds no realistic alternatives to a professional career. But the rule is also contradicted, interestingly enough, by at least some NBA players themselves. Although the best playground players may have more sheer talent than NBA yeomen, the crucial difference is that, in order to get to the NBA, the professional has had to exercise some of the prosaic virtues that facilitate success in any arena: hard work, practice, resolution, sobriety, dedication, and patience.

These virtues must be internalized, and for every NBA player who deviates from them at any opportunity he gets, there is another who orders his life so as consistently to reinforce them. Certainly it is telling that there are more ordained ministers in the NBA than regular churchgoers among the playground players in *The Last Shot*. Brent Staples's contention that basketball is the "true and only religion" of Coney Island may be correct, but it is not the true and only religion of the National Basketball Association.

Reflecting on a different topic, the political scientist James Q. Wilson once wrote, "What most need[s] explanation . . . [is] not why some people are criminals but why most people are not." If analysts of the city game were to focus for a moment on young men like Russell Thomas, they would not be limited to cursing a system that will not significantly alter until human nature itself does. They might even see how and under what circumstances hoop dreams can offer a gateway to something other than a player's last shot.

Contentions

Victim Art

Terry Teachout

THE critic Paul Elmer More once described John Dos Passos's novel *Manhattan Transfer* as "an explosion in a cesspool." Much the same thing could be said of "Discussing the Undiscussable," an essay by the *New Yorker*'s dance critic Arlene Croce which was published in that magazine's December 26 issue. Croce's piece provoked a collective howl of outrage from the Left-liberal cultural establishment comparable to the furor that erupted in 1989 when Washington's Corcoran Gallery canceled an exhibition of photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe.

As it happens, homosexuality and AIDS figure prominently in both controversies. Croce's essay was occasioned by the New York premiere of *Still/Here*, a full-evening dance by Bill T. Jones, a choreographer who is black, homosexual, and HIV-positive. Many of

TERRY TEACHOUT *is associate editor of the* New Dance Review *and editor of* A Second Mencken Chrestomathy, *just out from Knopf.*

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Jones's earlier dances were strongly political in content (his last large-scale work, premiered in 1990, was called *Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land*). *Still/Here*, by contrast, is political only by implication. It is a multimedia spectacle about death and dying, based on videotaped statements by participants in a series of "survival workshops" Jones conducted for people suffering from AIDS, cancer, and other terminal illnesses.

Jones has lately overtaken Mark Morris as America's most talked-about choreographer. He has appeared on the cover of *Time*, is the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant," and, most recently, was the subject of a *New Yorker* profile by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the equally trendy black academic, that can best be described as fawning:

> To all his projects he brings a searching intelligence. But the world does not love him only for his mind, . . . he's become something of a poster boy for the *Zeitgeist*, a redoubtable achievement for someone working in the semi-sequestered, self-consciously avant-garde world of modern dance.

All this acclaim notwithstanding, opinions of Jones's choreographic gifts vary widely. Critics who dislike overtly political art tend to shun his work; those who see dance as a suitable medium for the making of statements about the condition of the world dote on it. But given the increasing politicization of the dance community—and the undeniable fact that the AIDS epidemic has had a particularly devastating effect on dance in America—it was to be expected that *Still/Here* would attract mainly favorable critical attention. One typical review, by Laura Shapiro of *Newsweek*, called it "so original and profound that its place among the landmarks of 20th-century dance seems ensured." Not surprisingly, all four performances given at the Brooklyn Academy of Music last December were sold out.

It thus came as a shock to many when Arlene Croce dismissed *Still/Here* in deliberately sensational terms:

> I have not seen Bill T. Jones's *Still/Here* and have no plans to review it. . . . By working dying people into his act, Jones is putting himself beyond the reach of criticism. I think of him as literally undiscussable—the most extreme case among the distressingly many now representing themselves to the public not as artists but as victims and martyrs. . . . People for whom art is too fine, too high, too educational, too complicated may find themselves turning with relief to the new tribe of victim artists parading their wounds. . . . What Jones represents is something new in victim art—new and raw and deadly in its power over the human conscience.

The sheer ferocity of Croce's attack on "victim art" was startling enough. But what made "Discussing the Undiscussable" even more controversial was the fact that she placed the phenomenon in a larger political and historical context:

> The arts bureaucracy in this country, which includes government and private-funding agencies, has in recent years demonstrated a blatant bias for utilitarian art—art that justifies the bureaucracy's existence by being socially useful. This bias is inherent in the nature of government . . . by the late 80's, the ethos of community outreach had reached out and swallowed everything else; it was the only way the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] could survive. The private funders soon knuckled under to the community- and minority-minded lobbies—the whole dynamic of funding, which keeps the biggest government grants flowing on a matching-funds basis, made the knuckling under inevitable. But ideology had something to do with this. . . . The ideological boosters of utilitarian art hark back to the political crusades of the 60's—against Vietnam, for civil rights. The 60's, in turn, harked back to the proletarian 30's, when big-government bureaucracy began. And now once again after a 30-year lapse we are condemned to repeat history.

Needless to say, Croce's essay caused a convulsion in the New York dance community (especially among her gay fans). But "Discussing the Undiscussable" would probably have gone unremarked in the larger world of culture had it been published in, say, the *New Criterion*, and had it not been written by Arlene Croce, the most distinguished dance critic of our time. It was the combination of Croce, who had not previously immersed herself in the culture wars, and the *New Yorker*, a mass-circulation magazine of impeccably liberal credentials, that triggered an uproar so intense that even *Time* and *Newsweek*, two magazines whose interest in high culture is normally tenuous at best, deemed it worthy of coverage.

THE first and most vicious of Croce's critics was Richard Goldstein of the *Village Voice*:

> To condemn a work of art without even seeing it has a Helmsian, not to say Stalinist, stench. . . . The vast terrain of her argument is a clue to Croce's real intention, which is to synthesize the arguments of the neocons into a primal scream against the values of contemporary art. . . . That this critic must be coerced into empathy may explain why her prose is threaded with racist and homophobic aperçus, mostly directed at Jones.

Several of Goldstein's criticisms were echoed, albeit in more temperate language, in a column by Frank Rich on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. Like Goldstein, Rich tagged Croce as a "neoconservative," adding that "her side, not the counterculture, won the last election." Also like Goldstein, Rich played the empathy card:

> To the extent AIDS is responsible for yanking death out of the American closet, history may show that the epidemic has changed our culture . . . this is the story of our time. Amazingly, Croce has missed that story, just as surely as she has failed to see that dying is part of art because it is part of life.

The *New Yorker* solicited responses to "Discussing the Undis-

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cussable" and published a carefully balanced selection in its January 30 letters section. Most were predictable, a few comically so. The cultural critic and self-styled pagan Camille Paglia, for example, contributed a short memoir: "I am a proud disciple of what Ms. Croce rejects as 'Warholism,' which melted the lines between high and low culture, artist and audience, art and life." Tony Kushner, author of *Angels in America*, called Croce a "reactionary" and claimed that the artists she dismissed as "victims" were in fact "politically engaged progressive people." And bell hooks (*sic*—she favors the lower case), Distinguished Professor of English at the City University of New York and author of such books as *Ain't I A Woman*, *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, and *Sisters of the Yam*, laid down the politically-correct law in no uncertain terms:

> To write so contemptuously about work one has not seen is an awesome flaunting of privilege—a testimony to the reality that there is no marginalized group or individual powerful enough to silence or suppress reactionary voices. . . . The publication of this piece alarms and threatens because it exposes the extent to which right-wing values, particularly censorship—the will to suppress dissenting voices, to limit artistic freedom and critical vision—are gaining cultural momentum. It is this dangerous trend that warrants critical vigilance and should provoke progressive resistance.

To be sure, Croce was not without her prominent defenders. The editor of the *New Criterion*, Hilton Kramer, writing in the *New York Observer*, called her piece "the most definitive essay on the arts in the 1990's that any American critic has yet written." He also had the best reply to Richard Goldstein:

> It may not have been shrewd, however, for Mr. Goldstein to invoke the specter of Stalinism in this context, for his own attack . . . reads at times like a contemporary version of an old *Pravda* editorial. About the only thing missing was the charge of "bourgeois formalism."

And John Leo, in his column in *U.S. News & World Report*, summarized "Discussing the Undiscussable" in terms no less admiring than Kramer's.

Interestingly, much of what was written by other dance critics about "Discussing the Undiscussable," while generally disapproving, was far milder in tone than the fulminations of Richard Goldstein and his ilk. Only *Newsweek*'s Laura Shapiro took the lowbrow road of outright anti-intellectualism ("[Croce's] thinking is rigorous, her standards are sky-high, and her prose is so rich and dense that occasionally it borders on the unreadable"). And Dale Harris, dance critic of the *Wall Street Journal*, published a review that made no mention of Croce's essay but blasted *Still/Here* as

> cheap in conception and shoddy in realization. . . . [Jones] pleases those who ask for little beyond the chance to exercise their feelings. Though he offers them the conviction that they are confronting issues of significance, they are not. They are merely confirming their preconceptions about the primacy of sincerity.

ONE of the more suggestive comments about "Discussing the Undiscussable" came from Deborah Jowitt, dance critic for the *Village Voice*:

> It's ironic . . . that Croce, so firmly opposed to the politicization of art, chose to turn her own critical essay into a political statement by declining to see the work at hand.

Yet several other dance critics, myself included, declined to see *Still/Here*, and with good reason. Those of us who write regularly about dance have learned to shudder every time we receive yet another press release inviting us to the premiere of an earnest new work "about" racism, sexism, or AIDS, the Unholy Trinity of dance in the 90's. *Still/Here* is, to put it mildly, very much in this vein, and its subject matter had been so heavily publicized in advance of the New York premiere as to make it a largely known quantity. (The literary critic Hugh Kenner has defined "conceptual art" as art that, once described, need not be experienced, a notion of obvious relevance in this connection.) It was, of course, within the realm of possibility that *Still/Here* was "a landmark of 20th-century dance," but the odds, in my judgment, were against it: I have never seen a work by Jones that struck me as of more than modest choreographic interest. So I stayed home—and did not write about *Still/Here*.

Arlene Croce also stayed home, but did write about it. An old hand at stirring up trouble, she may well have realized that to flaunt her not having seen *Still/Here* would make the maximum possible amount of journalistic noise, thus drawing further attention to the actual subject of "Discussing the Undiscussable": the continuing politicization of American art. The hostile responses to Croce's essay proved her point as comprehensively (if not so eloquently) as the essay itself. It is no coincidence that the angriest attacks on "Discussing the Undiscussable" came from people who normally write not about dance but about politics. For such people, merely to express public disapproval of victim art is to be both a "neocon" (a term roughly comparable to "fascist" in the latter-day lexicon of left-wing abuse) and a "homophobe" (the 90's equivalent of "McCarthyite").

In the case of Arlene Croce, both of these assertions are patently absurd. Whether or not she has any political affiliations cannot be deduced from her published writings, but to call her a neoconservative is to betray little more than ignorance of the meaning of the word.* As for Richard Goldstein's scurrilous accusation of homophobia, one need only point out that Croce is, among other things, a noted booster of such unabashedly homosexual choreographers as Mark Morris and Peter Anastos.

The real objection to Croce's essay (beyond the fact that it

* It can only be a matter of time before conspiracy-mongers at the *Village Voice* discover that Croce's first job in New York was at *National Review*.

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sharply criticizes the funding practices of the arts bureaucracy—itself an unforgivable sin) is that it argues for the autonomy of art. This is an argument that Croce has been making aggressively from the very beginning of her career. "I never saw a good ballet that made me think," she wrote in 1975, a statement presumably intended to evoke T.S. Eliot's famous remark that Henry James had "a mind so fine that no idea could violate it." It is also an implicit defense of the aesthetic position known in the crude shorthand of cultural journalism as "art for art's sake."

"Art for art's sake" will always be a *casus belli* in times when the cultural establishment is committed to art as a means to purely utilitarian ends. Thus *The Cradle Will Rock*, Marc Blitzstein's 1937 agitprop opera, contains a peppy number savaging the very idea of art for art's sake ("It's smart, for Art's sake,/To part, for Art's sake,/With your mind, for Art's sake"); and Rob Costin, who is HIV-positive and who had the last word in the *New Yorker*'s January 30 letters section, concluded by saying that "even art for art's sake has to address AIDS if it is to survive." History, as Croce points out, is repeating itself yet again; and, one might add, it is doing so yet again in the famous pattern—the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.

It is here that the irony alluded to by Deborah Jowitt is to be found. Anyone who has not kept up with the looking-glass world of high culture in the 90's might well be astonished to learn that opposing the politicization of art is now taken to be a political act. But such is indeed the unhappy case. All the more reason, then, to praise Arlene Croce for speaking out against the poisonous amalgam of self-pity and self-righteousness that is victim art.

Syllabus Conundrum?

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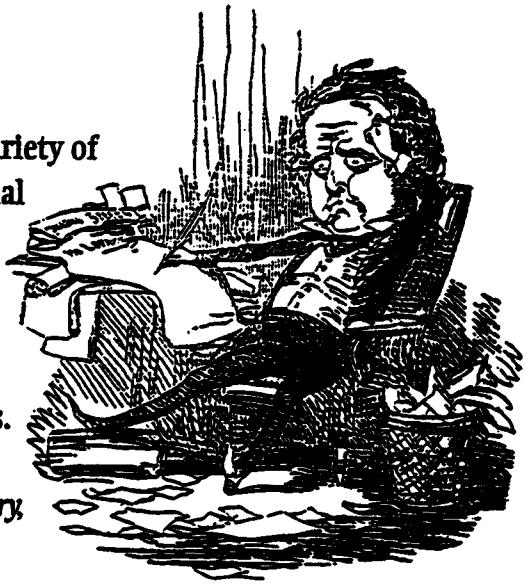

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Ancient Wisdom, Modern War

ON THE ORIGINS OF WAR AND THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE. By DONALD KAGAN. *Doubleday. 606 pp. $30.00.*

Reviewed by AARON L. FRIEDBERG

PITY the poor statesman who turns for help to the world of ideas.

Closest to him in terms of physical proximity and overall outlook is a dense thicket of "policy intellectuals" centered in Washington, D.C. While they often have strong opinions on what to do about this or that problem of the day, these people rarely can tell the government insider anything he does not already know.

If our policy-maker ventures further afield, he will find himself wandering amidst the strange and alien subcultures of contemporary academia. Here he is likely to confront insurmountable barriers of language, outlook, and intellectual style. Political scientists are too often in the grip of theories which are highly abstract or overly deterministic (or both), and which are, as a result, of little use to policymakers. The overwhelming majority of professional historians today regard the study of statecraft with disdain.

There are still oases, however, at which the statesman may stop to draw sustenance. One of them is connected to a rich tradition of thinking about politics that originates in the historiography of the Peloponnesian war of the 5th century B.C.E. Donald Kagan, the Bass Professor of History, Classics, and Western Civilization at Yale, is this century's premier student of that monumental struggle. Busy policymakers may feel they have nothing to learn from the past—still less from the ancient past—but Kagan's masterful new book, ranging selectively over two-and-a-half millennia of world history, proves them wrong.

In *On the Origins of War,* Kagan sets out to examine a series of major confrontations: the Peloponnesian and Second Punic wars of antiquity, World Wars I and II in this century, and a "near war," the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Though he treats each with a historian's respect for its complexity and distinctiveness, Kagan is also in search of answers, however tentative and conditional, to some large and general questions: what, if anything, can these very different conflicts teach us about the sources of peace and the causes of war?

Each of Kagan's five central chapters can be read on its own with pleasure and profit; each draws together a great volume of evidence from the latest and best historical scholarship; and each is a model of analytic concision and narrative clarity. In each case, after sketching the character and objectives of the rival protagonists, Kagan proceeds down the often twisting trail of events that led them into conflict, pausing at forks in the road to show where an alternative path might have been taken and to explain why it was not.

Some of these stories will be relatively unfamiliar to contemporary readers. Thus, those who associate Hannibal only with elephants in the Alps will be interested to learn how he got there and how close he came to defeating Rome and altering the entire subsequent history of the Western world. But even when it comes to more recent and better-known events, Kagan's interpretations are incisive, fresh, and, in some cases, controversial as well. In a brief concluding chapter Kagan makes an attempt to summarize, but the larger lessons he draws are scattered across the pages of his book and, also, lodged discreetly between its lines.

To BEGIN with, Kagan renders a harsh judgment on the impoverished conception of human nature and its relationship to war that is harbored by so many contemporary social scientists. Most modern theorists assume that humans are primarily rational beings, an assumption that often leads to lofty visions of unstoppable progress and perpetual peace. Kagan, however, embraces another and more pessimistic conception of man, namely:

> the darker picture painted by Thucydides of a human nature that remained largely the same over the centuries [and] a human race that escaped chaos and barbarism by preserving with difficulty a thin layer of civilization.

In Kagan's view, individuals and the larger social groups into which they coalesce may be motivated in part by "interests," by the rational pursuit of "tangible and practical goals such as wealth, prosperity, security, and freedom from external interference"; but they are also driven by other emotions and desires, among the most powerful of which are fear and the sometimes insatiable demand for "greater prestige, respect, deference, . . . honor."

It is this mix of interests and passions that causes states to seek power and it is the pursuit of power that leads them often into war. This has been "the normal condition" of human society throughout recorded history, and there is little reason to expect it to disappear.

War, thus, may be an inevitable outgrowth of human nature. But particular wars are not. Wise and prudent policies can help to make war less likely, and foolish ones make it more so. Certain errors, as Kagan shows, recur. Overweening ambition and the restless pursuit of honor often impel leaders to abandon policies of moderation in favor of grander but disastrous new undertakings. Accordingly, Kagan's heroes are builders and

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balancers like Pericles and Bismarck, and his villains are their successors, Alcibiades and Kaiser Wilhelm II, whom he sees as adventurers and extremists.

As Americans today should bear in mind, victorious powers are especially prone to misjudgment. In dealing with former foes they tend to be either unduly accommodating or excessively harsh or, worst of all, both in sequence. When confronted by rising challengers they often overestimate the extent to which such states are motivated by tangible interests (as opposed to fear or the desire for respect) and hence overstate the ease with which their opponents can be appeased or deterred.

After defeating Carthage in the First Punic War, Rome imposed a peace "of the least stable kind: it embittered the losers without depriving them of the capacity for seeking revenge and without establishing a system able to restrain them." The Romans then were slow to appreciate the extent of the threat from a resurgent enemy intent on revenge, and were forced to pay a terrible price for their mistakes. The errors made by the democracies in dealing with Germany after World War I were thus nothing new. Had they learned the lessons of the Punic wars, the architects of the Versailles treaty would have either been much tougher or far more lenient.

As a student of statesmanship, Kagan is sympathetic to the leaders he examines, in the sense that he seeks honestly to understand their actions, but he does not shrink from assigning praise and blame. In his analysis of the Cuban missile crisis, for example, he paints a disturbing picture of John F. Kennedy's leadership in the events leading up to and during the most dangerous confrontation of the nuclear age.

Kennedy's weak performance in a series of foreign-policy events—the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Vienna summit, and the construction of the Berlin Wall—all helped tempt Nikita Khrushchev into deploying missiles in Cuba. The Soviet leader seems to have decided that this advance would provoke only another ineffectual response:

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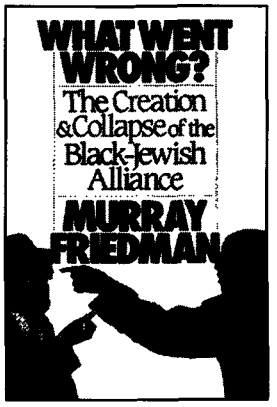

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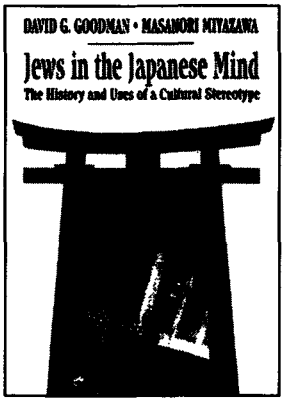

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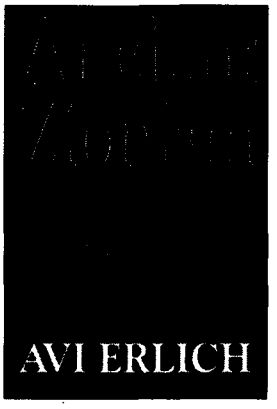

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and, according to Kagan, Khrushchev was nearly right. Were it not for overwhelming domestic political pressures, Kennedy might have been simply willing to accept Soviet rockets in Cuba in the strategically dubious belief that the location of such weapons was unimportant. (Robert McNamara, Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, is said to have enunciated the erroneous principle justifying this position with the following words: "a missile is a missile is a missile.")

As the events examined in this book show, there are no foolproof formulas for avoiding war. But certain approaches clearly work better than others. "[G]ood will, unilateral disarmament, the avoidance of alliances, teaching and preaching the evils of war," writes Kagan, "are of no avail." The renunciation of power cannot help to keep the peace. To the contrary: maintaining peace "requires active effort, planning, the expenditure of resources, and sacrifice," the very measures that also make for success in war. Nor is the mere possession of superior power by itself adequate; the demonstrated willingness to employ it is crucial, too.

Can democracies remain strong and determined over long periods of time? On this score, Kagan has some doubts. Clearly, when sufficiently provoked, democratic regimes are quite capable of defending themselves, their interests, and their honor. But modern liberal democracies also have a deep-seated ambivalence about the acquisition and use of power (which flows from what Kagan describes as "an ethical system that is commercial, individualistic, libertarian, and hedonistic"), and their governments are under continual pressure to "satisfy domestic demands at the expense of the requirements of defense."

Modern democracies thus may find themselves in a dangerous double bind. Hampered in the maintenance and use of their power by internal constraints, they can invite challenges because of their apparent weakness. And when such challenges come, they are not always prepared, even as they find it difficult to turn away.

As the pressures today mount for disengagement and retrenchment, Americans—statesmen and citizens alike—would do well to contemplate the practical wisdom that this important book contains.

Nature, Nurture, Culture

RACE AND CULTURE: A WORLD VIEW. By THOMAS SOWELL. *Basic Books. 331 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by JOSEF JOFFE

As long as mainstream publishers like Basic Books bring out works like *Race and Culture,* all is not lost—though one can just imagine teeth gnashing and blue pencil poised to strike as an editor's sensitized eyes settled on terms like "Negroes" or "more advanced societies." Thomas Sowell's work is a relentless, 331-page attack against the wisdom of the day, which comes under the frazzled labels of "multiculturalism," "PC," and "affirmative action"; but the argument takes place on a breathtaking intellectual level that ought to command the respect even of those who violently disagree with him.

This is an "old-fashioned" book, one that has become rare in academia, which tends to produce ever longer answers to ever smaller questions. (Perhaps it is no accident that Sowell, who is in Stanford, California, is not ensconced at the university itself but at the Hoover Institution that lives in uneasy coexistence with it.) The book, to exaggerate just a bit, is a project in the way of Montesquieu or Macchiavelli: make your point and buttress it with examples drawn from different climes and cultures so as to highlight the universal in a sea of singulars, so as to distinguish real causes from assumed ones—and the fleeting truth from the general. Indeed, Sowell goes Montesquieu and Macchiavelli one better. There are no footnotes in *The Spirit of the Laws* or *The Discourses*; by contrast, *Race and Culture* offers 57 pages of them, displaying a breadth of cross-cultural research Sowell's gainsayers will find hard to match.

Sowell's intellectual enemy is "'multicultural diversity' as tribal symbolism and multiprovincialism." His approach is this:

> History shows patterns. . . . Its facts are especially needed when dealing with racial beliefs and issues, where powerful emotions reign, and where prejudice and bias have often been the norm. If nothing else, history can help dissolve the provincialism of time and place, and the hypocrisy of *selective moral indignation.*

And his terse warning is: if you cut yourself off from cultural competition, you lose.

"Multiculturalism," as practiced in the United States (and in Britain and Canada) in the name of a shoddy relativism and of racial justice, is to culture what protectionism is to economics: it rewards inefficient producers, brakes innovation, and drives down the general welfare. Sowell compares this kind of isolation from competition or cross-fertilization to "population 'islands' on land—the Scottish highlanders, the *montagnards* of Vietnam, the Kandyan Sinhalese in Sri Lanka." All of these are distinguished by "conspicuous cultural lags behind others who were either in contact with more of their own people or with other cultures more accessible by rivers, harbors, or plains."

Sowell's prime counter-example is the Jews,

> [a] relatively small group of people spread thinly around the world, and yet so prominent in so many countries and in so many fields that it hardly seems credible that there are fewer Jews in the entire world than there are Kazakhs or Sri Lankans.

Yet there is a twist: not all Jews are alike. Where they have been stuck in "small separate countries in cultural backwaters" such as the East European *shtetl* or Yemen, "they have lagged far behind the achievements of other Jews exposed to the wider world."

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In other words, genetics is not destiny. But neither does the "environment," that crude catch-all of social engineering, produce Einsteins at the snap of yet another affirmative-action program. What, then, *does* explain differences in the performance of groups, be they defined by ethnicity or race? Why, for example, do Japanese in Japan score about the same in comparable IQ tests as whites in the United States, whereas Japanese in the U.S. score dramatically higher than local whites?

Sowell seems to say that the key is "cultural values." But "culture" is just as tricky as those rubbery terms "nature" and "nurture." Do those Japanese who have emigrated to the U.S. have a different culture from their brethren back home? Or do they somehow represent a self-selected gene pool—composed of those who are smarter to begin with, or more ambitious, or more adventurous? Or is it the painful encounter with a new majority culture, one that seeks to deny the newcomer a "place in the sun," that galvanizes and spurs performance?

Sowell does not give an explicit answer to this question (nor do I believe that one is possible). But his key message, suffusing chapter after chapter, is as clear as can be: do not fall into the trap of cultural protectionism, a/k/a multiculturalism. "Exaggerated cultural 'identity,' " Sowell warns,

> is more than a foible. Among its more serious social consequences are (1) putting a dangerous leverage in the hands of extremist fringes within each group, and (2) stifling the cultural advancement of lagging groups by sealing them off from the cultural advantages of the larger society around them.

If you glory in the ghetto, you will get plenty of identity, and identity-mongers, but little else: no economic clout, no skills for acquiring it, no tools for advancement. At best, you can learn how to exploit the racial/ethnic/religious spoils system, as have the ultra-Orthodox *haredim* of Jerusalem (an example Sowell does not use). But once you eschew the market in favor of identity politics, the spoils system, instead of "leveling the playing field," feeds on itself. Thus,

> Malay students [in Malaysia] . . . have tended to specialize in Malay studies and Islamic studies, which provide them with no marketable skills with which to compete with the Chinese in the marketplace. . . . Blacks and Hispanics in the United States follow a very similar pattern of specializing disproportionately in easier fields which offer less in the way of marketable skills.

What happens then? Unable to prosper, Sowell argues,

> such groups then have little choice but to turn to the government, not only for jobs but also for group preferences to be imposed in the marketplace, and for symbolic recognition in various forms.

In other words, affirmative action begets not equality, but inefficiency; not justice, but zero-sum politics, the most divisive (and ultimately most ugly) contest there is.

WITH regard to justice, Sowell also warns us not to confuse "statistical 'under-representation' " with "discrimination." For instance:

> There are about a dozen engineering schools in the United States where the average mathematics score alone on the Scholastic Aptitude Test is over 700 out of a possible 800. There were fewer than 200 black or Mexican-American students who scored at that mathematics level in 1985, fewer than 100 Puerto Ricans, and fewer than 50 American Indians. Even if all the students at the 700 mathematics level applied to engineering schools, all four groups would still be grossly "under-represented" in engineering schools, for together their pool included fewer than 500 students—compared to more than 3,600 among Asian Americans.

Yet in order to get "fair" representation, elite schools admit underqualified minority students. Sooner or later, they fail. And even this is not the worst of it. Minority students who would "otherwise qualify for admission to institutions at the second or third tier" having been siphoned away, these

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lower-ranking institutions may in turn also have to "begin to admit minority applicants who fall below their normal admissions standards." And so,

> youngsters who could have succeeded at San José State University may be failing at Berkeley, while youngsters who could have succeeded at a community college are failing at San José State. . . . In neither case does this imply that the students are "unqualified" in some absolute sense. *They are mismatched institutionally.*

The notion of collective justice (to each *group* its due) detracts not only from the most efficient allocation of resources, but also, as one must surmise, from individual happiness. As a collective, Group A may take pride in placing *x* percent of its own at Berkeley by means of quotas. But if too many of A fail, the individuals concerned will acquire neither credentials nor self-esteem.

Economists like Sowell do not deal with "happiness"; they base their models on "utility" and "indifference" curves, "nonsubjective" constructs that are thought to yield sturdier foundations for their theories of behavior. Nor do they deal with intentions; they are concerned with outcomes. A firm may *want* to amass profits; economists explain why it went bankrupt. A company may want to eliminate rivals and constrain trade; economists tell us why that is bad for the consumers and the economy as a whole.

This is why Sowell's economic approach is such a valuable contribution to the post-Marxist debate which pits not classes but races, religions, sexes, ethnicities, or cultures—collectivities all—against one another. In every case, the object of the struggle—the intent—is "justice." But beware of the law of unintended consequences, warns Sowell. What you want may not be what you get; you may get worse.

As an economist, Sowell takes us into a realm that economists, in their search for abstraction, have generally evaded: into culture, history, and geography. Some things, like "culture," he cautions, are independent variables that explain outcomes better than "discrimination." Indians in Uganda do better than Ugandans, Chinese in Malaysia do better than Malays—in spite (or perhaps because?) of discrimination. Yet unlike a set of chromosomes, "culture" is not an unyielding given. Culture can change, and thereby improve the performance of groups—but only if cultural values are themselves *open* to change and competition. Competition, the willingness to adapt, is vital not only for firms, industries, and economies, but also for individuals, groups, and societies.

How about "infant industries," i.e., groups that cannot yet compete for one reason or another? Sowell, a rigorous free-marketeer, would probably oppose this special case of protectionism, too, on the grounds that not everybody must do equally well in all pursuits; let "comparative advantage," hence specialization, reign. Yet it may make sense to shelter "infant industries" if—and only if—such protection is temporary and does not become a way of life. In the former case, there is a built-in impetus for speedy adaptation. In the latter—permanent protection along the lines of America's now 30-year-old affirmative-action regime—you get subsidized inefficiencies in the economy and a group-spoils system in the polity.

SOWELL is not just the compleat economist. In this era of "nonjudgmentalism" and besotted relativism, he does not shy away from value judgments. "There is much in the history of all peoples," he argues,

> that does not deserve respect. Respect is earned, not conferred. It is not a door prize. Equal respect is a contradiction in terms, since the very concept of respect implies an inequality of esteem and regard. All may be entitled to a common decency but not all can receive a higher relative ranking.

This is true in the way that 2 + 2 = 4 is true. But it is a truth that multiculturalism denies and defies. A review of *Race and Culture* in the *Washington Post* (August 23, 1994) complains that the "point to this exercise in history, sociology, and culture is unclear." This is probably the most polite put-down Sowell's brilliant and contrarian book will receive. Though *Race and Culture* is densely written, and sometimes with more locutions than necessary, the "point" of the exercise is crystal clear: to make us question propositions that have passed all too quickly into the realm of correct thinking. Unmatched in the breadth of its scholarship and the decisiveness of its arguments, Sowell's book is a splendid démarche against the *Zeitgeist*—which is the best recommendation an intelligent reader could want.

Genocides?

THE HOLOCAUST IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT: VOLUME I: THE HOLOCAUST AND MASS DEATH BEFORE THE MODERN AGE. BY STEVEN T. KATZ. *Oxford. 702 pp. $40.00.*

Reviewed by JERRY Z. MULLER

IN RECENT years, partisan evocation of the Holocaust has begun to occlude its image in historical memory. Ever since Betty Friedan, for example, in *The Feminine Mystique* referred to the suburban home as the "comfortable concentration camp" of contemporary American women, the Holocaust has enjoyed a prominent place in feminist discourse, with one feminist tract after another drawing parallels between the plight of women and that of Europe's Jews.

Homosexual activists, too, have eagerly hitched themselves to the Holocaust bandwagon. "The fate of Jews and gay people," writes the late Yale historian, John Boswell, in his *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (1980), "has been almost identical throughout European history, from early Christian hostility to extermination in concentration camps"; the

JERRY Z. MULLER, *who teaches modern European history at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., is the author of* The Other God that Failed: Hans Freyer and the Deradicalization of German Conservatism *(Princeton).*

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burgeoning corpus of homosexual-rights literature is studded with similar references to the allegedly analogous fate of Jews and homosexuals under Nazi rule.

In the rhetoric of anti-abortion advocates, parallels with the Holocaust are also ubiquitous. After the conviction of Paul Hill for the murder of a doctor and a security guard en route to a Pensacola, Florida abortion clinic, one right-to-lifer (an Amherst College professor of jurisprudence, no less) was moved to ask:

> Would the media . . . have been filled as they have in this case with reports of "religious zealots" if a band of Jews had killed guards and executioners on their way to work in Auschwitz? Would we have heard stories of the killing of innocent workers, who were merely carrying out orders, and pursuing a policy that was fully "lawful" under the laws of the Third Reich?"

And Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association informs us in his recent book, *Guns, Crime, and Freedom*, that "the Warsaw ghetto stands in history as a shining example of the dangers of gun control."

Even as it is reduced to a cliché, the Holocaust, it is clear, has acquired cultural cachet.

Over a decade ago, Steven T. Katz, a professor of Jewish history at Cornell University—and now the newly-appointed director of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.—began exploring the question of whether and in what sense the Holocaust ought to be considered unprecedented and unique. Comparison, he concluded, has all too often diminished historical comprehension. As he put it in a book published in 1983:

> Unsophisticated generalizations abound, sectarian pronouncements take the place of sound arguments, and moral disapproval substitutes for hermeneutical precision and historical accuracy.

Katz subsequently embarked on the ambitious venture of systematically comparing the Holocaust with all other instances of mass murder which have been suggested as parallels. In this book, the first of three volumes, he considers instances of mass death which occurred before the rise of modern Europe. Subsequent volumes will examine the seemingly more compelling analogies often drawn between the Holocaust and mass murder in recent times. But to judge by this first volume alone, Katz's project promises to rank among the more remarkable feats of scholarship of recent years.

In the detailed exposition of the historical episodes examined in this book, the distance between the premodern parallels and the tragedy which befell the Jews in our century becomes clearer as Katz proceeds. He shows, for example, that slavery in ancient times, despite its horrors, was governed by a utilitarian rationale at odds with genocidal purposes. Later, though approximately 100,000 women were put to death in the recurrent witch-crazes that began in Europe in 1450—a horrifyingly large number—these fatalities occurred over three centuries, making them a demographically insignificant fact. As for the persecution of homosexuals, Katz's careful sifting of the evidence shows that over the course of many centuries homosexuality *per se* led to capital punishment in only a handful of cases.

One of Katz's major contributions is to provide what is perhaps the most satisfying discussion yet of the nature and the extent of Christian anti-Semitism. In particular, he shows the fundamentally misleading nature of analogies drawn by some Jewish scholars between the Holocaust and the Crusader massacres of Jews in the early Middle Ages. He documents in great detail the recurrent attempts of Popes and Christian monarchs to protect Jews and to forbid their murder or forced conversion. Over the course of more than eight centuries, the Church, for example, not only rejected the accusation that Jews commit "ritual murder," but sought to contain the violence against Jews which the libel peri-

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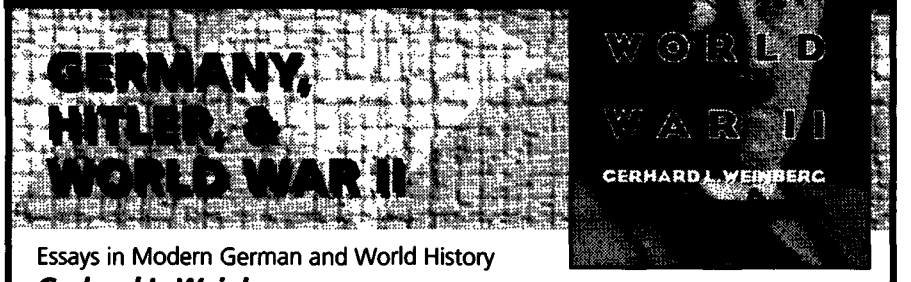

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odically provoked in Christian populations (often incited by lower orders of the clergy).

This is hardly to deny that the long history of Christian persecution of Jews was "crucial to creating the matrix for the rise of Nazism." But while stressing this fact, Katz also parts company with distinguished scholars of the Holocaust who have maintained that the continuities between Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism are more compelling than the differences. Nazism, Katz concedes, inherited from the Church the notion that Jews were fundamentally alien, but the novel element of Nazism lay in its racial explanation for Jewish otherness and in its insistence that this alien people must be eliminated from the earth. If Christian anti-Semitism was by its very nature "self-limiting," Katz concludes, Nazism represented not the fulfillment of Christian dogma but its "revolutionary overthrow."

To place the toll of Christian anti-Semitism in perspective, Katz shows that in the massacres of the First Crusade of 1096—which loom so large in Jewish memory as a precursor of the Holocaust—between only 1 and 2 percent of Europe's Jews perished. As for the Spanish Inquisition, historians have documented the deaths of only 1,865 Jews over two-and-a-half centuries of persecution. The Nazis, in murdering six million Jews, destroyed approximately 65 percent of European Jewry, and almost 40 percent of world Jewry, making the Holocaust unprecedented in the annals of the Jewish past.

The Holocaust's singularity in *world* history, however, cannot be assessed in numerical terms. In the 19th century, as Katz reminds us, some twenty million people perished in the Taiping Rebellion of 1857. In our own terrible century, Stalin murdered more people than Hitler, and Mao in all likelihood—if an accurate tally is ever made—will be found to have murdered more prodigiously than his Soviet comrade in arms.

With murder carried out on such a grand scale in Russia and China, in what way can the Holocaust be considered unique? For Katz, it is the "unconstrained, ideologically-driven imperative that *every* Jew be murdered" which "distinguishes the *Shoah* from prior and to date subsequent, however inhumane, acts of collective violence, ethnocide, and mass murder." The Holocaust alone is an example of genocide if that term is employed in the strict sense on which Katz insists: an attempt "to murder in its totality any national, racial, religious, political, social, gender, or economic group."

As *The Holocaust in Historical Context* amply demonstrates, Katz is a scholar with inexhaustible energy and overpowering erudition. He has a working knowledge of Hebrew, Yiddish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Latin, and is a veritable one-man history and theology department, capable of entering deeply into a daunting range of topics and rethinking the issues at stake. Even with his considerable intellectual assets, however, this book—for reasons both of style and substance—is likely to encounter a thorny reception at best.

Not long ago, the distinguished historian Gertrude Himmelfarb lamented the decline of footnotes in academic writing. Though Katz's book might partly restore her spirits—on page after page, the footnotes below the text struggle for space with the text itself—the line between erudition and pedantry is not always clear, and almost every reader will find that Katz has crossed it more than once. And even readers who find the footnotes useful are likely to be put off by Katz's prose, which, though often powerful and striking, is sometimes labored and abstruse and occasionally descends into such difficult-to-decipher formulations as:

> Anti-Semitism as a historical phenomenon, in its polymorphous concreteness, is always embodied in singular forms and unique spatiotemporal loci that directly affect its actualized character. In this sense it is always something azygous, whatever larger history the sum of its specific manifestations comprises.

MATTERS of style and presentation aside, in some academic quarters Katz's book will no doubt be derided as "derivative." Professional historians today share a strong prejudice that the only significant contributions to knowledge are those which amass new facts from hitherto untapped sources. Works based upon synthesis and reconsideration—no matter how wide-ranging or analytically acute—are seldom greeted with applause. Katz brings together facts from an array of topics, each of which is already known by some historian, but most of which will be new to almost every historian, and which in their sum have remained unknown to any previous historian. Because scholars immersed in the reconstruction of a particular phenomenon rarely have the time or the inclination to read broadly and think deeply about events far from their area of expertise, they stand to gain a great deal from Katz's exploration of comparative instances removed in time and space from the Nazi era.

Outside the historical profession, too, this book is likely to encounter criticism. Those wedded to an ideology of Jewish victimhood—and who also hope, on that basis, to form coalitions with other groups—will be discomfited by Katz's claim that the Jews were the victims of a murderous campaign that was in some sense historically unique. Others, particularly those seeking to harness the memory of Jewish suffering to some cause of their own, will undoubtedly dismiss his findings as Jewish special-pleading, or as a denial that other groups have suffered in history as well. Here, Katz, who marshals the forces of scholarly research and rational analysis, is up against a barrier not easily penetrated by either reason or fact.

Whatever criticism this book is likely to encounter, Katz is keenly aware of what is (and is not) at stake in the controversy over the uniqueness of Hitler's war against the Jews. He adheres to the conviction that Jewish identity should *not* be bound up with the Holocaust. "There is no 'ethnocentric glory' in having one million Jewish children turned into ashes strewn

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across the Polish landscape, six million Jews in all being reduced to corpses," he writes. Furthermore, there is no "'prestige' in what happened to the Jewish people under the Third Reich, and I do not claim any 'prestige' for the uniqueness that I will defend in relation to the Holocaust." Instead of building a new Jewish identity on a foundation of victimhood, Katz has a simpler and in my opinion a nobler aim in view: it is historical understanding, no less and no more.

Victor and Vanquished

MORE PRECIOUS THAN PEACE: THE COLD WAR AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE THIRD WORLD. By PETER W. RODMAN. *Scribners. 654 pp. $35.00.*

Reviewed by STEVEN R. DAVID

THE cold war may have been waged over Europe, but it was fought in the third world. While Europe and the rest of the developed world were enjoying their "long peace," millions of people were dying in wars involving the superpowers in far-flung corners of the globe. It was in this sprawling arena that all of the conflicts in which American troops fought and died since the end of World War II took place, and it was here that the United States and the Soviet Union came closest to nuclear war. In the end, developments in the third world played a decisive role in undermining the Soviet Union and bringing the cold war to a close.

Why did the United States and the Soviet Union invest so much blood and treasure to influence a ragtag collection of undeveloped and unstable countries where, frequently, so little of apparent economic or strategic value was at stake? Why and how did the United States emerge triumphant in its global confrontation with the USSR? These questions are among many addressed by Peter W. Rodman in *More Precious Than Peace*, a gripping account of the U.S.-Soviet competition in the third world.

Rodman is well-equipped to tell the tale, having held a series of high-ranking behind-the-scenes positions in the foreign-affairs apparatus of Presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Bush. His elegantly written book—equal parts history, analysis, and reminiscence—makes extensive use of his long tenure in government. Following a loosely constructed chronological approach, Rodman explores the origins of American and Soviet interests in the third world and traces the deepening involvement of the superpowers in places like Vietnam, Angola, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Central America.

Although Rodman does not attempt to theorize unduly about American interests or about the formulation of foreign policy, much can learned from his account of the bureaucratic intrigues, the ideological battles, and the sheer muddling-through that often characterized American policy in the third world. All told, some large and important insights about the character of American foreign policy shine forth from these pages, which convincingly explain why and how, contrary to the expectations of so many academic and journalistic commentators, the United States eventually got the better of the Soviet Union in their rivalry in the third world.

One clear lesson we can draw from this book is that given the nature of our polity, the United States tends not to be successful abroad when it pursues interests that lack a moral as well as a strategic element. U.S. foreign policy does best when the American people are convinced they are doing good. Thus, American support for democracies like Israel has remained strong largely because of the confluence of moral and strategic imperatives. Questions about the character of our clients, on the other hand, have tended to cripple our efforts in places like Central America and Angola, not to mention Vietnam.

If morality is an important ingredient of successful American diplomacy, so is power, and Rod-

STEVEN R. DAVID, *here making his first appearance in* COMMENTARY, *is chairman of the political-science department at Johns Hopkins University.*

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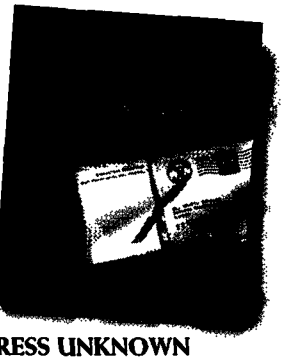

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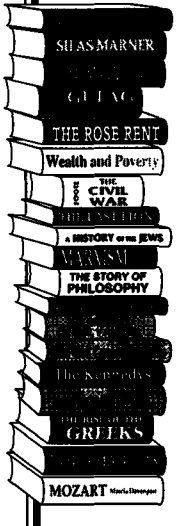

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man is especially effective in decrying the liberal tendency to believe diplomacy can suffice without a credible threat of coercion to back it up. He makes a compelling case that congressional restrictions on the executive branch's ability to apply military force have at times unwisely hobbled American diplomacy. The Tunney and Clark amendments, for example, blocked the U.S. from aiding Jonas Savimbi in Angola and eliminated Washington as a player in that drama. Similarly, congressional strictures prevented the U.S. from intervening in Cambodia at a time when we might have saved countless lives. (Rodman has little to say about whether there are circumstances in which congressional restrictions might play a constructive role, by keeping the U.S. from sliding into conflicts where it has no pressing interests at stake.)

Whatever the proper balance between the executive branch and Congress, American willingness to apply force clearly tipped the balance in the competition with the Soviet Union, as Rodman convincingly shows. After years of being on the losing end of struggles in which we supported established governments against insurgents, the U.S., under Ronald Reagan, turned the tables and began backing insurgencies of its own in Central America, Cambodia, and (most crucially of all) Afghanistan: the "Reagan doctrine" was born.

Although this policy was attacked by the Left (for allegedly violating international law and for heightening the risk of confrontation with the USSR) and by some on the Right (for overextending American resources), it succeeded in driving the Soviets from entrenched and not-so-entrenched positions on their periphery and around the globe. It also impelled a rethinking in Moscow about third-world adventures, doing much in the process to undermine the ruling Politburo's confidence in its own foreign policy and in itself.

Soviet "gains" in the 1970's thus came back to haunt the Kremlin in the 1980's; Moscow's forays in the third world succeeded only in draining away scarce resources and undermining what the USSR needed most from the West: détente. Looking back at all this, one must judge the Reagan doctrine a major contribution to dispatching the USSR to the dustbin of history—and at a remarkably low cost to the United States.

GIVEN the fate that was befalling the Soviet Union in those years, it would clearly have been in Moscow's interest to entertain smaller ambitions in the third world; but restraint evidently ran counter to the nature of the beast. On the U.S. side, however, a refusal to engage Moscow in the global struggle would have served us ill. Though Rodman never articulates a sustained rationale for a policy of active interventionism, a brand of Wilsonian internationalism is endorsed in his book. By advancing American interests *and values* in the third world and elsewhere, he suggests, the United States enhances its strength, just as by ignoring evil the United States undermines its self-confidence and ultimately its own power.

Rodman's concludes his book by arguing that the disappearance of the USSR has not eliminated the dangers and opportunities awaiting the United States in the third world. Certainly, in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, few analysts would have predicted that we would soon intervene militarily in Iraq, Somalia, and Haiti. Undoubtedly, the third world will give rise to other unpredictable challenges as well, as new regional conflicts erupt and the prospects for nuclear proliferation continue to grow. Rodman is especially worried by revolutionary Islam. The dangers it poses, he writes, are being minimized by the same crowd that sought to downplay (and for the same spurious reasons) the nature of the Soviet challenge in the third world.

Certainly, dealing with this and other hazards will require clear and creative thinking about whether and how the United States should apply power to defend its interests and advance its moral values. Although the conflicts examined in *More Precious Than Peace* are thankfully receding into the past, this is a book with much to say about how the United States should conduct its foreign policy in a changed but still hostile world.

Lord of the Ants

NATURALIST. BY EDWARD O. WILSON. *Island Press. 380 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by JONATHAN ROSEN

"GO TO the ant, thou sluggard," counsels the book of Proverbs, "consider her ways and be wise." Edward O. Wilson took that advice early. Scouring the swamps and woodlands of the deep South hunting for bugs, Wilson followed an insect trail right out of an impoverished childhood and into the halls of Harvard, where he is University Professor, curator in entomology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, and one of America's most distinguished biologists.

In *Naturalist*, Wilson puts his own life under a microscope, examining in clear, candid prose his formative years, his rapid rise as an evolutionary biologist, and his later battles as the controversial prophet of sociobiology. Wilson's career has been central enough for his autobiography to entail a discussion of many of the major scientific issues of our age—while also telling the story of a boy's outdoor education that has the mythic American appeal of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*

Wilson begins his memoir in 1936 with an image of himself at age seven, alone on Paradise Beach, Florida, where he was spending the summer with a family he did not know while his parents (he was an only child) worked out their divorce back in Pensacola. Despite the loneliness and emotional dislocation associated with that period, Paradise Beach remains for Wilson what its name implies, a place of early wonder where he discovered the mysteries of the natural world. It was to be his salvation.

He has, as he admits, almost no recollection of the names or faces

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of the people he stayed with. He scarcely understood what was happening with his parents. But the jellyfish he found one day in the sand, the giant stingray he caught a glimpse of as he sat alone on a pier watching the water for hours, still excite him with the thrill of discovery. Abandoned to nature, Wilson discovered his calling.

That same summer, fishing alone, the young Wilson jerked a needlefish out of the water too forcefully. One of the spines that gives the fish its name pierced the pupil of his right eye. He was not taken for medical treatment, and by the time he rejoined his parents he had lost the vision in that eye. Wilson tells us all this in the matter-of-fact manner of a scientist explaining the evolution of an organism, blaming neither his parents for abandoning him nor the family he stayed with for ignoring his injury. The operation he later underwent was, he recalls, "a terrifying 19th-century ordeal."

There was more. In adolescence, Wilson lost most of his hearing in the upper registers, possibly from a hereditary illness; this made it difficult or impossible to hear bird or frog calls at a time when birds were his passion. The impairment, however, merely shifted his focus. Birds were out, bugs were in: "I would thereafter celebrate the little things of the world, the animals that can be picked up between thumb and forefinger and brought close for inspection."

He was, by his own admission, a teenage workaholic, rising at 3 A.M. to deliver 420 newspapers, returning home by 7:30 for breakfast, devoting after-school hours to bug-hunting and the Boy Scouts (he became an Eagle Scout in three years). He attributes his disciplined habits to the military academy he was sent to while his parents continued to work out their separation. At seven—the same age at which he was wounded by the needlefish—he was the youngest cadet at the Gulf Coast Military Academy, but he writes with deep affection concerning what was clearly a very lonely year, claiming he "can still summon easily the images of a perfect orderliness and lofty purpose" that fit so well his later quest as a naturalist. Wilson's admiration for military heroism—he finds the Congressional Medal of Honor "more mysterious and exalting than the Nobel Prize"—seems to have reinforced his stoicism.

Certainly there was plenty he might have complained about. After one year at the Academy, Wilson wound up with his father, an alcoholic who seldom kept a job or an address for more than a few years at a time and who committed suicide when Wilson was eighteen. In the space of eleven years, Wilson recalls, he attended fourteen different public schools. Wandering through the Depression South, often living in rooming houses, he found order only in nature. After school, he would head for the woods and swamps, his butterfly net and collecting jar in tow.

Ants became Wilson's specialty. He knew enough about them by the time he was a nineteen-year-old undergraduate at the University of Alabama to be invited by the state Department of Conservation to study the spread of "fire ants," an invading South American species. Wilson happened to have been the first person to discover the presence of the species in North America—in 1942, when he was thirteen years old. And of course he went on to make major contributions to our understanding of these humble insects, including cracking the riddle of how they communicate (by laying complex chemical trails).

THE theme of redemption through science and, in particular, through the natural world, runs thoughout Wilson's story. Faced with scientific challenges in later life, he would often respond by heading for the field. One such challenge came in the 1950's and 60's, when, already an established professor at Harvard, Wilson suffered the arrival of James Watson—"the Caligula of biology"—whose discovery of the genetic code with Francis Crick shifted the focus away from field studies and to the laboratory.

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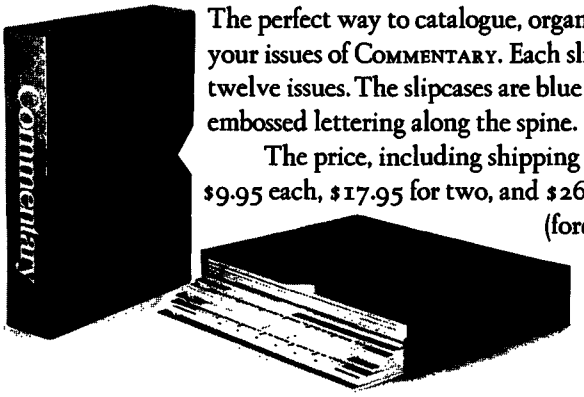

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Wilson's belief that collecting and classifying were a necessary basis for larger understandings, and his growing interest in the bastard field of ecology, were ridiculed by the arrogant young Turks of molecular biology for whom answers lay exclusively under a microscope. He restored himself with a series of population studies on tiny islands in the Florida Keys. Depopulating the islands and then counting the insect species as they returned, Wilson helped chart a new direction for biogeography and reaffirmed for himself the importance of old-fashioned outdoor study, with its physical hardships and its requirement of encyclopedic knowledge of individual species.

This is not to say that Wilson was not ambitious for a grand synthesis. His most controversial work remains his summation of sociobiology, the discipline that seeks to discover the biological basis of social behavior. In *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1974), Wilson added to his own expertise in insects a vast amount of research on the rest of the animal kingdom—including man.

While most scientists applauded the bulk of the book's findings, the chapter on human behavior touched off a storm of protest. It is worth quoting Wilson on his findings:

> Human beings inherit a propensity to acquire behavior and social structures, a propensity that is shared by enough people to be called human nature. The defining traits include division of labor between the sexes, bonding between parents and children, heightened altruism toward closest kin, incest avoidance, other forms of ethical behavior, suspicion of strangers, tribalism, dominance orders within groups, male dominance overall, and territorial aggression over limiting resources. Although people have free will and the choice to turn in many directions, the channels of their psychological development are nevertheless—however much we might wish otherwise—cut more deeply by the genes in certain directions than in others.

It was sentiments like these that provoked a spate of attacks following the book's publication, including one occasion at which Wilson, invited to speak on sociobiology at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, was doused with a pitcher of ice water by protesters accusing him of racism and sexism. Students at Harvard called for his resignation, and a group of Wilson's Harvard colleagues—including Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin—published a letter in the *New York Review of Books* denouncing his book as dangerous. The letter, Wilson notes, was intended not to foster scientific debate but "to destroy credibility." He did not learn about it until the journal was on the newsstands.

For Wilson this marked the final phase of his transformation from unworldly rube to scientific sophisticate. With the help of Daniel Bell, the Harvard sociologist, and Eugene D. Genovese, the Marxist historian, he gave himself a crash course in the relevant areas of political theory. "Neither of them cared very much for sociobiology," Wilson writes of his instructors, "but they disliked even more" the tactics that had been used against him. The result of Wilson's new research led to a book, *On Human Nature* (1979), which furthered his exploration of the relationship between biology and the qualities that make us human.

On Human Nature received the Pulitzer Prize, as did another book, *The Ants* (1991), written with Bert Holldobler, an encyclopedic account of Wilson's first love. Wilson now devotes a fair amount of time to writing about the threat to species diversity that comes with the destruction of ecosystems. He is a reluctant warrior who came to political activism late, but his conservationist efforts are an expression of a true conservatism, growing out of allegiance to the world that produced him as a scientist, and beyond that to the world that produced us as a species.

It would be hard to imagine a more persuasive argument for the place of man in nature, or for the place of nature in the life of a man, than Edward Wilson's eloquent examination of his own life.

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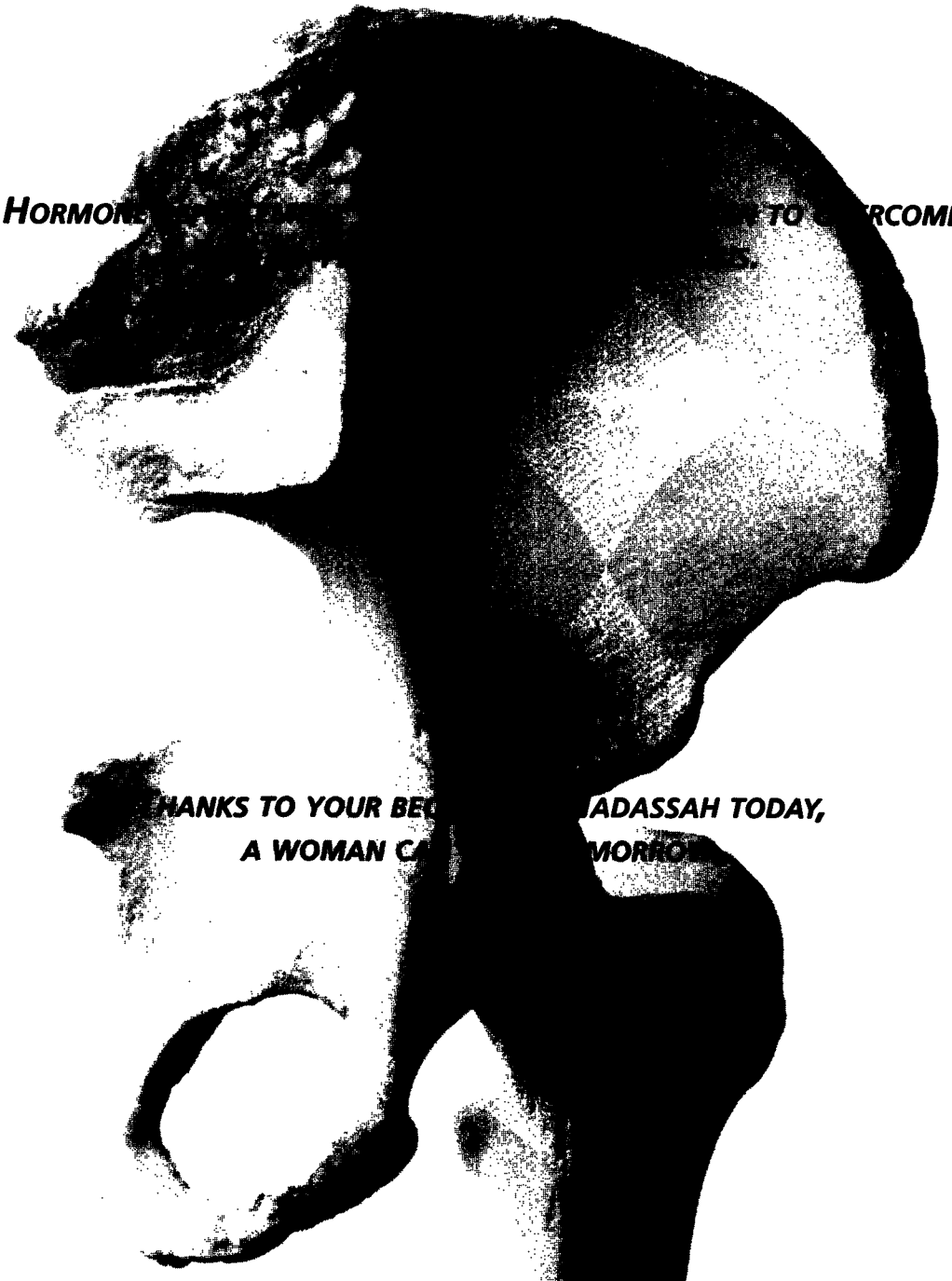

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